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The New York Times

LATE EDITION

Today, mostly sunny, dry weather, a light breeze, high 74. **Tonight,** partly cloudy, low 58. **Tomorrow,** sunshine giving way to clouds, remaining dry, high 70. Weather map, Page A20.

VOL. CLXXIII .... No. 59,918 © 2023 The New York Times Company NEW YORK, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2023 $4.00



NARIMAN EL-MOFTY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

In the village of Tijghicht in Morocco, women who lost their homes after a deadly earthquake cooked for their community.

Angry Garland Rebuffs G.O.P. On Biden Case

Combative Hearing on the President's Son

By GLENN THRUSH

WASHINGTON — Attorney General Merrick B. Garland offered a fiery defense of the Justice Department's investigation of Hunter Biden on Wednesday, telling a House committee he was "not Congress's prosecutor" — and would not reveal details of the inquiry no matter how much pressure lawmakers applied.

During a grueling hearing before the House Judiciary Committee that foreshadowed a bruising impeachment fight ahead, Mr. Garland repeatedly refused to answer questions about internal deliberations or offer explanations for decision-making in the investigation, or the two federal indictments of former President Donald J. Trump.

House Republicans view Mr. Garland as a linchpin as they seek to bolster an impeachment inquiry into President Biden that is grounded, thus far, in inconclusive evidence that he profited from the business dealings of his son, Hunter. They have suggested Mr. Garland also might face impeachment, or contempt charges, for not fully answering their questions or providing access to documents and witnesses they have demanded.

Many of the claims and insinuations they leveled against Mr. Garland — that he is part of a coordinated Democratic effort to shield the Bidens and persecute Mr. Trump — were not supported by fact. And much of the specific evidence presented, particularly the testimony of an investigator who questioned key decisions in the Hunter Biden investigation, was given without context or acknowledgment of contradictory information.

Mr. Garland, a former federal appellate judge known for his circumspect and soft-spoken demeanor, took a more aggressive approach than during past hearings, alarmed by relentless attacks against his department. Countering their claims, he denounced escalating threats Trump supporters have directed against prosecutors, including the special counsel Jack Smith, and F.B.I. agents, prompting significant increases in security.

"Singling out individual career public servants who are just doing their jobs is dangerous — particularly at a time of increased threats to the safety of public servants and their families," said Mr. Garland, who later reacted angrily when a Republican committee member called out a career prosecutor by name.

"We will not be intimidated," he added. "We will do our jobs free

Continued on Page A22

BIDEN, IN MEETING WITH NETANYAHU, SPOTLIGHTS UNITY

EAGER TO REIN IRAN IN

President Voices Concern on Israeli Court and the Palestinians

By PATRICK KINGSLEY and MICHAEL D. SHEAR

UNITED NATIONS — For the first time since Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel returned to office last December, he and President Biden met face to face on Wednesday in a session that both soothed and aggravated tensions between the leaders and demonstrated Mr. Biden's wider commitment to Israeli security.

By ending his informal moratorium on in-person contact with Mr. Netanyahu, Mr. Biden showed he was prepared to overlook personal frustrations with the prime minister's domestic policies in favor of furthering international projects of mutual U.S.-Israeli interest: blocking Iran from building a nuclear weapon and establishing formal relations for the first time between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

"Even when we have our differences, my commitment to Israel is ironclad," Mr. Biden said at the



DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Biden met on Wednesday.

start of the meeting at a hotel near the United Nations, pledging to ensure "that Iran never, never secures a nuclear weapon."

Mr. Biden also hinted that Mr. Netanyahu might be invited to a more formal meeting at the White House within months — a major boost for the prime minister.

"I hope we will see each other in Washington by the end of the year," the president said. Later, the White House issued a statement saying that Mr. Biden had extended a formal invitation.

But other comments by Mr. Biden, made before the meeting, made clear that the relationship remains thorny. He voiced measured criticism of Mr. Netanyahu's efforts to reduce the power of Israel's Supreme Court, which have

Continued on Page A8

UKRAINE IMPLORES U.N. TO GET TOUGH

Revoking Russia's Veto Is a Must, Zelensky Says

This article is by ***Richard Pérez-Peña, Farnaz Fassihi*** *and* ***Michael Crowley.***

President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine, denouncing Russia's "unprovoked aggression," told the U.N. Security Council on Wednesday that if it did not break the grip of Russian veto power, it would be powerless to resolve conflicts around the world, adding his voice to the rising calls to reform how the body works.

"Ukrainian soldiers are doing with their blood what the U.N. Security Council should do by its voting," Mr. Zelensky said on Wednesday, arguing that "veto power in the hands of the aggressor is what has pushed the U.N. into deadlock."

Mr. Zelensky's appearance before the council helped make it the highest-level direct confrontation over the invasion of Ukraine, with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov of Russia and his American counterpart, Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, taking the seats normally occupied by their ambassadors and stating their countries' cases.

Mr. Lavrov and Mr. Zelensky did not cross paths — the Russian did not enter the hall until after the Ukrainian had spoken and left — in a bit of choreography that reflected a session in which the two talked past each other.

The Russian foreign minister read a long and detailed speech, citing decades-old events and familiar grievances, speaking so fast that the U.N.'s simultaneous translator stumbled and struggled to keep up — all without engaging with the accusations leveled against his country. "We hear slogans — invasion, annexation, aggression" Mr. Lavrov said, as if those were mere words, not facts.

In relatively brief remarks, Mr. Zelensky did not dwell at length on the bloody realities of the war, knowing that his allies would do so, but instead took aim at the structure of the Security Council, the U.N. arm empowered to take the toughest actions, including imposing sanctions and deploying military personnel.

Continued on Page A10

A Perilous Moroccan Road May Offer a Lifeline

Reopening the Path Is Crucial for Recovery After a Quake

By CATHERINE PORTER and AIDA ALAMI

TIZI N'TEST PASS, Morocco — Climbing up around 7,000 feet over the Atlas Mountains, the road through the Tizi N'Test Pass bends impossibly around cliff edges, expands and pinches uncomfortably to a single fragile track, and creeps under jagged rocky outcrops.

For a century now, the stretch of lonely road has been known for its stunning views and perilous turns. That all changed on Sept. 8, when an earthquake struck Morocco, killing at least 2,900 people and bringing down dozens of villages perched high along the edges of the road.

Then, the serpentine road became a vital lifeline — the conduit to lifesaving ambulances and essential aid to devastated villages in the mountains. But first, it had to be reopened.

Just hours after the earthquake struck, construction crews set out in graders, diggers and dump trucks to start the difficult and dangerous task of clearing the road of giant boulders shaken loose by the tremors and sent crashing down the mountainsides, crushing buildings on their way.

The work has not stopped since.

"We won't sleep until we clear the road," Mohammed Id Lahcen, 33, said on Friday, sitting on a pile of broken rocks beside the hulking grader he'd been operating for the past week.

Mr. Id Lahcen and his team managed to carve out enough space for some vehicles to pass after several days of labor, but they were still working to clear the boulders and debris pushed to the road's edges. He said he had only taken breaks to dash out of the way of the slabs of rock that keep smashing down the mountainsides, nibble food and snooze in his grader. He hadn't been home to shower or change clothing.

In many areas hit by the quake, there were complaints that the government was slow to rescue and bring relief supplies to stricken villages. That left it to residents to dig out victims them-

Continued on Page A6



PHOTOGRAPHS VIA THE MANHATTAN DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Works by the artist Egon Schiele, from left: "Self-Portrait," "Portrait of a Boy" and "Prostitute."

Schiele Artworks Looted by Nazis Are Returned

Recipients Are Heirs to Murdered Owner

By TOM MASHBERG and GRAHAM BOWLEY

Seven works by the Austrian Expressionist Egon Schiele were handed over on Wednesday to the heirs of the Viennese cabaret artist who had owned them before he was murdered by the Nazis, marking a major turning point in one of the art world's longest-running Holocaust restitution cases.

The artworks were returned to the heirs of Fritz Grünbaum, who was killed in the Dachau concentration camp in 1941, in an emotional ceremony at the office of the Manhattan district attorney, Alvin L. Bragg, which investigated the case.

"This is of huge importance in our world," said one of the Grünbaum heirs, Timothy Reif, referring to the descendants of Holocaust victims seeking the return of looted property nearly 80 years after the end of World War II. "It sets the tone and the agenda for all future cases."

For more than a quarter of a century the Grünbaum heirs have sought the return of a number of different Schieles; their claims, which prompted civil suits in state and federal courtrooms, have been closely watched in the art world.

The battle over the collection

Continued on Page A14

Billions to Give Rural America Fast Internet May Fall Far Short

Wide-Open Landscapes Present Challenges

By MADELEINE NGO

FORT TOWSON, Okla. — Along the southeastern edge of Oklahoma, where expansive cattle ranches and empty storefronts dot the landscape, the lack of high-speed internet service has become a daily frustration for residents.

Wanda Finley, a fourth-grade teacher in Sawyer, Okla., said the satellite service at her home was often too slow to use, and it sometimes went out for days. She cannot schedule medical appointments, request prescription refills or pay her bills online until she gets to work. Nearly every weekend, she drives about 40 minutes to school to prepare her weekly lesson plan because it can take minutes for a single web page to load at home.

"I'm hoping it will change," Ms. Finley, 60, said, sitting in her home on a recent afternoon.

If President Biden gets his way, Ms. Finley and her neighbors will benefit from a $42.5 billion program to expand fast internet access across the country. The funding, which was included in the 2021 infrastructure law, is part of an initiative that has high ambitions: to provide "affordable, reliable high-speed internet" access for every home and business by 2030.

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Portraits of Fire Victims

A picture is emerging of some of the 77 people who died in a fire in South Africa on Aug. 31. PAGE A4

Spanish Women Will Play

With a promise to address sexism in the soccer program, the team agreed to compete in coming matches. PAGE A14

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Where the Wind Means Jobs

Labor leaders worry that some federal incentives for renewable energy do not come with strict standards on pay. In Maine, they added their own. PAGE A16

Risky Therapy Raises Alarm

An unapproved product used in spine surgeries at a New York hospital came with a warning, then a complaint: Patients should have been told. PAGE A18

The House, Deeply Divided

Speaker Kevin McCarthy, grasping for G.O.P. votes to bring spending bills up for debate, proposed a new measure with even deeper cuts. PAGE A22

BUSINESS B1-5

A Pause on Interest Rates

Central bankers held rates steady at 5.25 to 5.5 percent, but said they could still make a move this year. PAGE B1

A Different China Trade War

Cosmetics sales in China are soaring, but exporting countries are missing out on much of the action. PAGE B1

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A Receiver Quiets His Critics

The Jaguars' Christian Kirk heard the naysayers over his four-year, $84 million deal, then basked in their silence when the team rolled late in 2022. PAGE B6



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Redefining a Brand

Matthieu Blazy is transforming Bottega Veneta, Vanessa Friedman writes. Above, a look from 2022. PAGE D7

Her Life, Now a Cabaret

Brooke Shields makes sense of a career that's included dates with George Michael and drama with her mom. PAGE D1

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Schubert in an Armory

The tenor Jonas Kaufmann stars in "Doppelganger," a staging of "Schwanengesang" by Claus Guth. PAGE C1

An Interview's Fallout

The Rolling Stone co-founder Jann Wenner's long reign at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame ended quickly. PAGE C1

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Michelle Cottle PAGE A24

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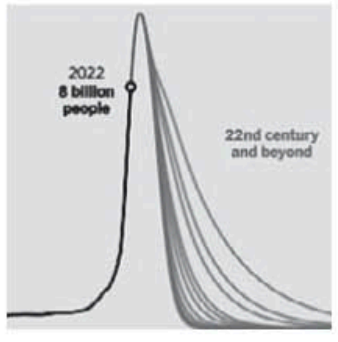
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TODAY'S PAPER

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VIDEO Fifty years into hip-hop's constant evolution, many of today's rappers don't write down their lyrics at all. A new Diary of a Song shows how emcees "punch in" to tracks now. *nytimes.com/music*

INTERACTIVE The world's population may peak in your lifetime — and declining birth rates in some areas may lead to geopolitical advantages. Explore infographics at *nytimes.com/opinion.*

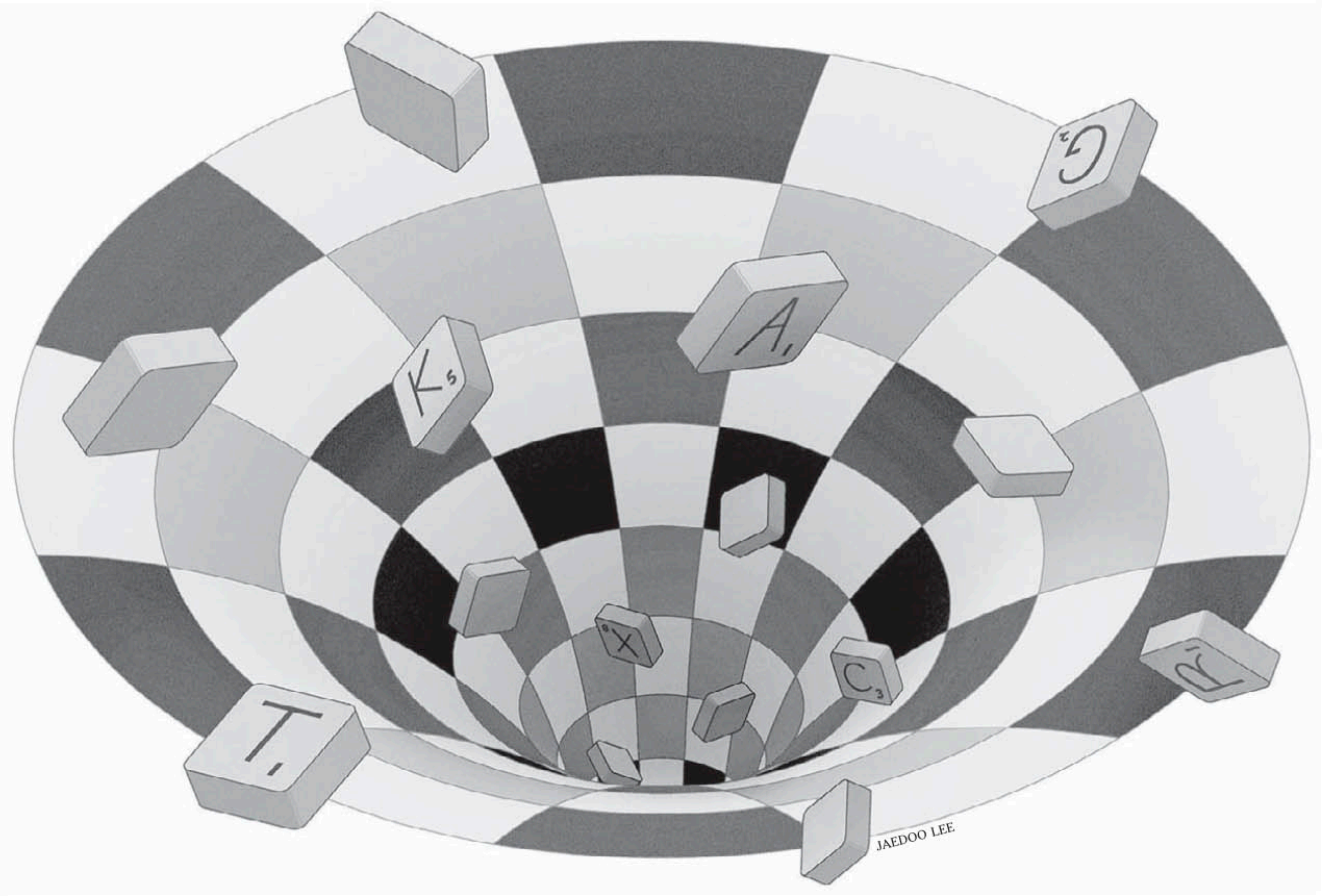
WELL Is vitamin C actually good for your skin? What results should you expect if a topical product touts it? Find out what dermatologists have to say at *nytimes.com/well.*

Quote of the Day

"Is Zelensky elected to Congress? Is he our president? I don't think I have to commit anything."

SPEAKER KEVIN MCCARTHY, *Republican of California, expressing his hostility to approving additional funds for Ukraine while referencing its president, Volodymyr Zelensky. Page A10.*

The Story Behind the Story



An Editor Finds Scrabble Is More Than Words

By ISAAC ARONOW
Isaac Aronow is an editor on the Games team at The New York Times.

It started, as so many of my obsessions do, with a YouTube video. The New Yorker posted a roughly nine-minute video titled "Professional Scrabble Players Replay Their Greatest Moves," and I, not even knowing that one could be a "professional Scrabble player," clicked immediately.

In that video, some of the game's greatest players showed off moves that were impressive and exciting. I had a little bit of experience with Scrabble, but after watching the video I was totally hooked, and wanted to start playing the game at a high level. The idea of being someone who could decipher an obscure anagram from a handful of randomly selected letters appealed to me. The competitive element further boosted my interest.

Armed with The New Yorker video and a lot of hubris, I took to an online crossword game server and was beaten so badly I wasn't sure I wanted to ever play again. I lost by over 150 points, an absolutely brutal defeat. "But," I thought, "you have to be bad at something before you get good at it," so I queued up for another game, and was promptly routed by a different player, this time by an even greater margin.

I like words a lot. I was never a "read the dictionary for fun" person, but I do love a good instruction manual. A big part of my job is making sure words are being used properly, and part of that means knowing the difference between a podium and a lectern (a podium is a flat, raised platform; a lectern is a stand for holding notes).

The most striking thing I learned as I kept playing (and losing) online, though, was the value of two-letter words. Scrabble is a crossword game and I had been thinking about it in the sense of long, marquee answers. In reality, being able to play small and make space for those big answers is just as valuable, if not more valuable, than being able to deftly figure out anagrams.

While elite players tend to have an uncommonly deep knowledge of the dictionary, many of them tell me that having a large natural vocabulary isn't always a big advantage. "This is not necessarily the kind of game where English professors always win," said Mina Le, an ear, nose and throat surgeon who is ranked 110th among Scrabble players in the United States. "The players at the top level tend to have some mathematical ability," she added, noting that knowledge of probabilities, knowing the distribution of the remaining tiles in the bag and thinking a few turns ahead are all far more valuable than simply making an aesthetic play with a cool word.

"It's less of a word-finding game, and more of a word-picking game," said Will Anderson, a North American Scrabble Championship winner who appears in The New Yorker video.

Mr. Anderson described elite Scrabble strategy as a mix between chess and poker. There's some deterministic elements, like in a chess game, but there is also some luck involved. Players can only work with the tiles they have in their racks, but can surmise what's left in the bag or what tiles their opponents might be holding to strategize their best move.

Dictionary knowledge does come into play, though. In competitive games, there's no check when someone plays a word to see if it's valid — it's up to the opposing player to determine the validity of a word, and to challenge if he or she thinks it's not allowed. Skilled players will often intentionally play a fake word to throw off a less-skilled opponent. There are at least three word lists that see varying degrees of use in North America, and competitive Scrabble has several governing bodies.

Scrabble is unique among games in that it has had an incredible longevity. The game was invented in the 1930s, and gained wide distribution in the late 1940s, meaning that it has a deep, rich history of competitive play, and a huge archive of games for new players to draw from as a learning tool.

So, armed with my newfound knowledge and a little bit of practice, could I become the word-picking, hybrid chess-and-poker-thinking crossword game master I wanted to be when I first got into the game? Sort of.

I decided I would play five games and see how I did before reviewing the games and retooling my approach. After four straight losses, I realized that my problem wasn't with my approach, but with my discomfort with the game's mammoth word list.

I spent a day or two relearning the short words, and familiarizing myself with some common longer ones. In the past, this would have been done with paper lists prepared by other competitive players, but with the aid of software, most players are learning these words on their phones or computers. I used a few tools, including Zyzzyva, which is managed by the North American Scrabble Players Association. There's also Aerolith, a web app created by César Del Solar, a software engineer and competitive Scrabble player, that makes custom quizzes and flashcards.

The names of both Zyzzyva and Aerolith are legal to play in Scrabble with the NASPA word list. Mr. Del Solar and Dr. Le, the surgeon, are married.

My next attempt went a little better. The online server I was playing on had started to pair me against lower-rated players, and I was able to eke out two wins in my next five games: One against a player rated around 1050, and the second against a player closer to 1000. (Top players on the website I was using are generally rated north of 2000.) I was still close to where I started, but I felt like maybe — just a little bit — I was making progress.

Today's Top Trending Headlines

Opinion | This Is My Shortest Column Ever. For a Reason. In a widely-read column, Thomas L. Friedman said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel "has formed the most extreme government in Israel's history." He advised President Biden, ahead of his meeting on Wednesday with Netanyahu, to ask where he stands on annexing the West Bank, Iran's nuclear program and the rights of Palestinians.

Temple University's Acting President Dies After Becoming Ill Onstage During a memorial service on campus Tuesday, JoAnne A. Epps, who was appointed acting president in April, slumped in her chair and was taken to a hospital, where she was pronounced dead. She had been a member of Temple's faculty for more than three decades, and was previously an assistant U.S. attorney in Philadelphia.

Jann Wenner's Rock Hall Reign Lasted Years. It Ended in 20 Minutes. As chairman of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame's foundation, Jann Wenner, a founder of Rolling Stone magazine, wielded gatekeeping power over the Hall. His leadership came to an end a day after he was quoted in The Times making remarks that were criticized as racist and misogynistic. The Times's Ben Sisario explained the fallout.

Prince William Takes a Dip in New York's East River The heir to the British throne, Prince William wore waist-high waders as he stepped gingerly into the East River to hear about a project to restore the oyster reefs in New York Harbor, Callie Holtermann reported. He was also stateside to announce the finalists for the Earthshot Prize, awarded by his own climate-focused charity.

A Headline From History

AMOROUS SQUID SEEKS PARTNER: ANY SEX WILL DO

September 21, 2011. Octopoteuthis deletron, a deep ocean squid native to the Pacific Ocean, was added to the list of species known to engage in same-sex sex, joining the ranks of bottlenose dolphins, bonobos and many insects, The Times reported. The findings were published in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society: Biology Letters and based on video made in Monterey Canyon off California. Far below the ocean's surface, the squid lead solitary lives in the dark. When a male passes another squid, it gives reproduction a chance, no matter the sex. "The animal is not making a mistake," said Marlene Zuk, a biologist at the University of California, Riverside. The behavior works, she insisted, or natural selection would have eradicated the behavior or the squid. "We still have squid," she told The Times.

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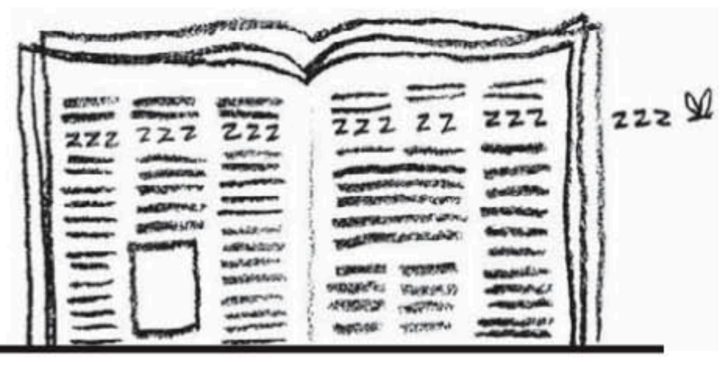
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Facts of Interest

Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave in the Caucasus Mountains slightly bigger than Rhode Island, is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, but is home to Armenians who are under the protection of Russian peacekeepers.
Azerbaijan Says It Has Regained Control of a Breakaway Armenian Enclave A8

The musical group Os Tincoãs took its name from a bird with a call similar to the moan of a cat that's common in the forests around Cachoeira, the Brazilian city from which the band hails.
Songs of Hope and Sorrow, Now Sung by One Man C6

California, which accounts for one-tenth of U.S. gasoline consumption, typically has the highest gas prices in the country in part because the state's environmental regulations require a unique blend, making supplies tight.
Why Price of Gasoline Is Still Rising B1

A study led by scientists from Monash University in Australia found that each year between 2010 and 2019, every person worldwide had an average of almost 10 days of wildfire smoke exposure.
Smoke From Wildfires Reverses Progress Made on Cleaning Air A16

Bloomingdale's introduced the Big Brown Bag, its iconic kraft-paper shopping bag, in 1973 amid a rebranding effort as the department store celebrated a century in business.
A Branding Milestone In a Brown Paper Bag D2

China requires that many beauty products, such as hair dyes or sun creams, be tested on live animals before they can be sold to Chinese consumers.
Masks Off. Lipstick On. Foreign Cosmetics Makers Out. B1

The Mini Crossword

■	■	1	2	3
■	4			
5				
6				■
7			■	■

9/21/2023 BY JOEL FAGLIANO

ACROSS
1 With 4-Across, painter of "Sunflowers" and "Irises"
4 See 1-Across
5 Post-pool need
6 Dollar bills
7 Animal whose name starts with a doubled letter

DOWN
1 Lack of rhythm?
2 Anywhere from 26 to 42, for the millennial generation now
3 Sports org. that awards the Stanley Cup
4 Missing
5 Something to stub

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

■	■	S	I	T
P	E	P	S	I
A	V	O	I	D
P	A	R	T	Y
A	N	T	■	■

Reader Corner
Responses and Replies


ISAAC ESQUIVEL/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK
In Mexico City and throughout Mexico, independence celebrations carry on through September.

Seven Latin American countries celebrate their independence between Sept. 15 and Oct. 15. Elda Cantú, who writes El Times, a newsletter in Spanish, invited readers to share how they observe those anniversaries where they live. Here are two responses, which have been translated from Spanish and edited.

The 18th and 19th of September are Chile's "birthday," two holidays when there is no work. All month long, the Chilean flag adorns houses, buildings and streets. Folk music is in the air; the consumption of empanadas, anticuchos and chicha explodes. This month, some of our compatriots are left without money and with a few extra kilos, but happy!
— SONIA EPSTEIN, SANTIAGO DE CHILE

The celebration of independence, for me, is a date filled with ambivalent feelings. On the one hand, most Mexicans celebrate the pride of an independent nation that unites us despite our differences. But on the other hand, the celebration is nourished by myths (as in any history), with a cry for independence that was not on the day it is commemorated, or with heroes who did not seek independence from Spain. Despite this, it is an opportunity to reflect on the values that define us as Mexicans, even if they are not the same as those of the founding fathers.
— ROGELIO GALINDO, MEXICO CITY

Listen In
Excerpts From New York Times Audio

On the latest episode of the "Hard Fork" podcast, the hosts Kevin Roose and Casey Newton were joined by Walter Isaacson, a writer and author of the biography "Elon Musk." For the last two years, Mr. Isaacson has shadowed Mr. Musk, who acquired Twitter, the platform now known as X, in October 2022. In this edited excerpt, Mr. Isaacson discusses his experience with the tech billionaire and his many "contrasting personalities."

KEVIN ROOSE: I'm curious what you were surprised by when you spent time with Elon Musk. What seemed different from his public persona?

The fact that he has five or six very contrasting personalities. He can be very intensely focused on an engineering problem or an assembly line issue where he will try to figure out why it's taking so long to make a valve. And then there's his giddy mode where he makes sophomoric jokes and watches "Monty Python." There's his inspiring mode where he talks about getting humanity to Mars. But what surprised me and was unnerving was his dark mode. Claire Boucher, known as Grimes, calls that his "demon mode."

CASEY NEWTON: Was he always that mercurial?

Yeah, it's not new. Part of it comes from his dad. And that's the first rule of a biographer other than shut up and listen to your subject: It's often all about dad. His father is still around and has Jekyll and Hyde personalities.

He could talk wonderful tales. I've talked to him on the phone quite a bit. But he can turn into Mr. Hyde He would berate Elon for an hour, sometimes for an hour and a half after Elon got bullied and beaten up on the playground.

Elon would have to stand in front of his father, and his father would tell him how stupid he was. And so that mercurial personality is very much there in Errol Musk. And what Maye Musk, Elon's mother — not surprisingly divorced from Errol — said, "The danger for Elon is that he becomes his father."

Listen to the episode at nytimes.com/hardfork.

Here to Help
How to Improve Indoor Air Quality

No matter who you are, you can benefit from breathing better air inside. The most effective way to improve your home's air quality, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, is to cut off the source of indoor air pollution. Here are a few steps to help you and your housemates breathe more easily. KATIE OKAMOTO

Reduce smoke. Cutting smoking tops the list of ways to improve the air in your home, said Dr. Enid Rose Neptune, a professor of pulmonology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and scientific adviser at the American Lung Association. The same goes for fireplaces, wood-burning stoves, incense and candles.

Regularly clean soft decor items. The surfaces of rugs, upholstery and bedding can collect pollen, dander, dust mites and other allergens, which float back into the air when disturbed. Use a vacuum, ideally one with a HEPA filter, at least once a week and wash your bedding about once a week.

Maintain air filters, air-conditioning units and fans. Anything that pulls air through it to work will collect dust that blows back into the air. If you have central air, change the filters regularly, especially when the system is in heavy use. Also be sure to clean window-unit filters and fans.


NADYA TKACH/ISTOCK

Swap gas for electric. When it's time to upgrade your stove, oven or heating system, go with electric if you can. Gas can expose you to a slew of potentially harmful pollutants such as carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, benzene and nitrogen dioxide, and its use is linked to childhood asthma.

Dry out damp areas. Mold and mildew, which can trigger allergies and contribute to respiratory issues, love moisture and humidity. Vent musty spaces by opening windows and running fans, and use a dehumidifier in areas that are always damp or have a humidity level above 60 percent, such as basements.

Katie Okamoto is the lead editor of sustainability at Wirecutter, a product recommendation site owned by The New York Times Company. For more advice, visit nytimes.com/wirecutter.


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Giving a Final Voice to the Victims Of a Fatal Fire in South Africa

By LYNSEY CHUTEL

JOHANNESBURG — As many as 600 people called the squalid five-story building at 80 Albert Street in downtown Johannesburg home. Weeks after an early-morning fire on Aug. 31 tore through the building, leaving at least 77 people dead, survivors recalled those they lost and the workaday family lives they led inside a trash-strewn building that had no heat, and little water or electricity.

They were South Africans who had made their way to Johannesburg from rural provinces, and migrants from countries like Malawi and Tanzania, all trying to eke out a living in the big city. They labored to pay rent to the illegal building's slum landlords. They found pleasure in small luxuries, and in one another. At least 12 children were among the dead.

These are some of their stories.



ILAN GODFREY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A memorial service this month at the Central Methodist Mission for those who lost loved ones in the Aug. 31 fire in downtown Johannesburg.

Jamila James, 3

A few days short of moving to safety

Jamila James rarely set foot outside the building because the streets were not safe, said her uncle, Moris Anamwala. She spent her days in a makeshift day care center on the fourth floor while her mother, Phatuma Anamwala, a migrant from Malawi, sold fruit and vegetables on a Johannesburg sidewalk.



In the evenings, Jamila stayed in the room that her mother shared with another single mother who had two children. The children all played together.

Jamila had dolls, a ball and a blue bicycle with training wheels and a basket — a recent gift from her uncle for her third birthday. But her favorite plaything was her uncle's mobile phone, he said. He lived down the corridor on the second floor, in a room with four other families, subdivided by sheets.

"She would see me and say, 'Uncle, your phone,'" Mr. Anamwala said. She couldn't read, but she knew how to navigate to a car racing game.

Jamila's mother and uncle had been making plans to send the little girl to Malawi to be raised by a grandmother whom she had never met.

Their village on the southeastern shore of Lake Malawi is poor, but they thought that Jamila would be safer there and could walk to school, play with her cousins and learn to ride her new bicycle.

Days before Jamila was scheduled to leave, the fire broke out. No one in their room survived.

Memory James, 2

Delighting in food and gospel music

Memory James was always at her mother's feet when she cooked. The tot would reach for cooking utensils, while her mother, Janet Issa, tried to keep her safe as she prepared food on a gas cooker in a shared room, recalled Memory's older sister, Peace James.

Ms. James, 19, was just beginning to get to know her baby sister, having moved to Johannesburg from Malawi in June to work as a seamstress.

Memory's parents could not afford to buy toys for the little girl, but the neighbors who lived in the same cramped quarters would let Memory leaf through their yellowing magazines. Even as a toddler, Memory would gently turn the pages of books, Ms. James said. She was especially excited when she found any pictures with food.

Memory would listen to music on her parents' mobile phones and seemed to especially like the gospel hymns saved to her mother's phone.

Memory and her mother perished in the fire, and her father is missing and presumed dead. Any photos of Memory were lost with them, Ms. James said.

Ms. James, who speaks no English, mustered the few words she knew to softly sing the hymn that her sister would always gurgle along to: "Just give me strength, to do everything I love to do."

Nokwanda Khanyile, 26

Teacher, bride-to-be

Nokwanda Khanyile, a primary school teacher, had already bought the leather skirt, a Zulu tradition, that would sway when she finally danced at her own wedding.



Ms. Khanyile and her cousin, Buyisile Khanyile, had danced for years at family gatherings, and they were looking forward to celebrating Ms. Khanyile's nuptials in her hometown, Nkandla, in South Africa's eastern KwaZulu-Natal Province, early next year.

Ms. Khanyile had a postgraduate degree in education but struggled to find work. She finally found a job at a primary school in Soweto a few months ago and had planned to move out of the run-down building as soon as she had saved enough money.

Her pay was meager. But she loved her students, her cousin said, and never complained about the packed classrooms in the underfunded public school.

"She was a really open person," Buyisile Khanyile said.

Her fiancé is also a teacher. The couple have a 2-year-old son, who was living in KwaZulu-Natal while his parents were working, laying the foundation for their future. Now, her fiancé is planning her funeral.

Memory Ngulube, 2

A rocking horse and pizza

Memory Ngulube would squeal as a coin-operated horse rocked her back and forth in a shopping mall arcade, said her uncle, Tom Nkhwazi Ngulube. On weekends, the little girl and her mother, father and uncle would walk the few blocks to the Carlton Centre mall, in one of Africa's tallest buildings, where they would split a pizza.



The little girl seemed to take after her mother, who loved the motorcycle racing games in the arcade.

At 2 years old, "she had a nice life," Mr. Ngulube said.

The dilapidated building was the only home she knew, and these outings were a respite. Her mother, Joyce Banda, had just started selling prepaid mobile phone vouchers on the street, while her father worked as an elevator technician. Other women in the building would watch Memory.

Her mother did not survive. Her father did, but he was badly burned.

Memory's uncle identified his niece's tiny body by her pajamas and the baby blanket she was still wrapped in.

Rokaya Mendru, 35

Posing for photos in her Sunday best

Rokaya Mendru worked seven days a week, trudging up and down Johannesburg's streets from sunrise to sunset selling mobile phone vouchers.



But Sunday afternoons were sacrosanct, said her younger brother, Michael Limbani, and his wife, Ines Adam. That was when she traded her yellow vendor's vest for her best threads and sauntered down to the city's trendy, gentrified corner, Maboneng, to have her picture taken by the street photographers who make a living taking portraits of tourists and local fashionistas.

Ms. Mendru was neither. She moved to South Africa in 2019, recently divorced and desperate to feed her four children back in Blantyre, the commercial capital of one of Africa's poorest nations, Malawi. She earned about 9,000 rand ($475) a month, and on a good month, as much as 12,000 rand ($633). But almost all of it went back to Malawi to feed, clothe and educate her children: Banatu, 18; Peter, 14; Ishmail, 10; and Ellen, the only girl, 6.

In Johannesburg, she shared a room with Mr. Limbani and Ms. Adam on the second floor of the building. She cooked for the family, and they shared everything. Her rice was perfectly fluffy, and her meat stew tasted like home, Mr. Limbani said. She never quite adjusted to Johannesburg winters, though, wrapping herself in three sweaters and a jacket to stand at intersections as she worked, her brother said.

Sunday afternoons were hers alone. In one photograph, she wears a figure-hugging blue skirt; in another, a royal blue lace dress. In yet another, standing back to back with a friend, she wears torn denim jeans. These were all outfits she, as a devout Muslim woman, would not have worn back home in Malawi. Her relatives didn't quite understand it, but they indulged her, saving her portraits.

Dressing up "would make her look beautiful," said Ms. Adam, her sister-in-law. "And she liked that."

Melita Mhlebi, 16

Aspiring to be Beyoncé, or a doctor

Melita Mhlebi spent the last few months watching clips of Beyoncé's latest world tour. She mimicked the dips and spins of the choreography and belted out "Break My Soul," her favorite song on the "Renaissance" album.



"Beyoncé was her role model, more than me," said her mother, Busisiwe Mhlebi.

Still, she was more like her mother than she acknowledged. Melita was good at math and science, as is her mother, who had wanted to go to medical school but could not afford it. Melita also inherited her mother's singing voice.

Her mother had left the rural Eastern Cape Province to chase the dream of becoming a backup singer. But as gigs dried up, the family moved into 80 Albert Street. Melita watched her 36-year-old mother's health deteriorate, her blood pressure rocketing to dangerous highs.

"She wanted to be Beyoncé; other times she wanted to be a doctor," her mother recalled.

They argued about Melita's spending hours at the internet cafe watching zombie movies and music videos. Her mother scolded her when she came home to the dangerous building after dark, dodging drug dealers and addicts. Mother and daughter fought often, but quickly made up, her mother said.

They wore each other's clothes, and Melita helped her mother take care of her 2-year-old brother. She had a smart mouth and a quick answer for everything, sass her mother now desperately misses.

"She was like my sister; we grew up together," Ms. Mhlebi said.

On the night of the fire, Ms. Mhlebi jumped out their window on the fourth floor and blacked out when she hit the pavement. She thinks her daughter saw her fall, thought she had died and ran back inside.



ILAN GODFREY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The building that burned last month, leaving at least 77 people dead. A trash-strewn home to as many as 600 people, it had no heat, and water and electricity were scarce.



Soufiane Aarrach with his older brother's clothes after digging through his bedroom for identity papers to declare him dead.



Damage from the deadly earthquake on the Tizi N'Test Pass toward the epicenter in the High Atlas Mountains in Morocco.



At the Tafingoult Military Field Hospital, a soldier treated one of those wounded in the earthquake. At least 2,900 people died.

After a Quake, a Perilous Moroccan Road May Offer a Lifeline



PHOTOGRAPHS BY NARIMAN EL-MOFTY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Bouchaib Igouzoulen, the mayor of the village of Tijghicht, above left, with Mourad Ouhida, 15, whose entire family was killed by the earthquake. Mr. Igouzoulen protested to get help digging out.

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selves and fellow Moroccans to bring food, blankets and mattresses.

Driving along the road to the Tizi N'Test Pass, the challenges faced by relief workers getting through became clear.

For days, concerned Moroccans from far-off places like Rabat, hundreds of miles to the north, packed their cars and trucks with donations, and then cautiously navigated their way up the road to Mr. Id Lahcen's machine, hoping to offer help and comfort to villagers who were still cut off. Upon seeing the blocked road, they begged Mr. Id Lahcen and his colleague, Mustapha Sekkouti, to help get their bags of supplies to the other side.

"This reality, we want it to be a memory in our history," said Mr. Sekkouti, 50. "I want to be able to tell my grandchildren that I was here. Helping clear the road to save lives."

The efforts by Mr. Id Lahcen and Mr. Sekkouti opened a gap near the top of the road on Sept. 11, allowing some aid to get through. However, temporary closures and jams that slowed traffic continued for days, forcing The New York Times to abort an initial attempt to reach the summit.

By Friday and Saturday, however, we were successful, traveling the full length of the road, 112 miles from the town of Oulad Berhil over the mountains north to Marrakesh, making stops along the way. The trip revealed a country that was emerging from the horror of an emergency, and taking the first difficult steps toward a recovery.

The road was clear, mounds of rubble pushed to its gnawed edges, and dotted with heavy machinery. Alongside rose the ruins of mud brick homes that had melted into their mountain perches and lines of large yellow and blue tents where survivors were now living.

Women carried pillows, mattresses and bags of donated clothing up its sides. Flatbed trucks crowded with stacked school desks and chairs rolled toward a cluster of tents in Asni, a town where high school and middle school students were preparing to start their school year on Monday.

A military field hospital, erected near the southern end of the regional road in the small town of Tafingoult, appeared to be quiet — just one bed in its air-conditioned emergency tent was occupied, and the sterile operating room was empty. Erected less than two days after the earthquake, the hospital had received some 600 patients for trauma: fractured bones, perforated stomachs, broken backs. Most had been sent to permanent hospitals or discharged.

"We are dealing mostly with chronic conditions now," said Dr. Noureddin El Absi, pointing to an older patient being treated for advanced diabetes, exacerbated since she had lost her medication in the rubble of her home. The worst is over, he said, and the worst had thankfully not come. Not a single patient they had treated so far had tested positive for the coronavirus.

Up near the top of the mountain pass, Hassan Ikhoudamen, 36, was sweeping up the broken glass bottles and dented soda cans that had tumbled off the shelf behind the bar of his cafe and modest guesthouse the night of the earthquake.

A week later, he deemed it was time to reopen his cafe.

He considered himself lucky: Though his house was destroyed, his wife and three sons had survived, and the cafe he had run for 11 years had suffered only cracks.

"The most important thing is to fix the building before winter," Mr. Ikhoudamen said.

Eager for a distraction from the misery they had witnessed, a group of young men from a nearby destroyed village arrived to play pool and hang out on the cafe's couches.

"Death is not here," said one, smiling.

About 20 minutes down the road in what remained of the village of Tinmel, Soufiane Aarrach, 26, dug through the rubble of his older brother Abderahim's bedroom, searching for identity papers so he could declare him deceased.

Abderahim was one of 45 people working to restore an ancient mosque nearby and was killed when the earthquake struck. The back half of the mosque, built more than eight centuries ago, was destroyed — as was the back of a house across the street where Abderahim was renting a room with his closest childhood friend, Mohamed El Ouaryky, who was also working on the renovation.

Their lifeless bodies had been found entwined in the rubble of their shared bedroom, Mr. Aarrach said.

"They were scared," he said. "They were protecting one another."

He dug in the rubble of the house in plastic slides, shoveling bricks and earth onto a growing mound of detritus, until he uncovered a sealed bag. Inside were clothes — a leather jacket, a white shirt, some beige pants. He pressed the shirt and pants to his face and inhaled deeply, his eyes filling with tears.

"These were my brother's," he said. "I said a prayer for him."

Down toward Marrakesh, where the route generously broadens and flattens, the village of Tijghicht revealed just how vital access to the road is.

Giant boulders had blocked the way after the earthquake, leaving villagers to dig through the destroyed houses for survivors and their deceased neighbors on their own with just a pair of shovels.

They fashioned makeshift stretchers out of wooden poles and rope, and carried the badly injured more than six miles to a nearby town on the main road.

On the fourth day after the earthquake, the mayor, Bouchaib Igouzoulen, lay down before a giant digger on the main road and refused to move until it churned toward Tijghicht. The next day, the road was cleared enough to allow ambulances through.

Since then, the villagers have resettled on some farm fields along the edge of the river below the remains of their homes. They've erected a row of tents — one for each family — under solar-powered lamps, brought in water from a nearby source with a long hose and organized rotations of cooks to make meals for 250 people over wood fires.

Leading a tour, Mr. Igouzoulen alternated between horror and hope, introducing neighbors still in shock from the sudden loss of a grandchild, a mother or, in the case of 15-year-old Mourad Ouhida, his entire family. Mr. Igouzoulen held the boy close, trying to comfort him.

Now that his village was reconnected to the main road, the mayor was setting his mind to the future — how to rebuild his village, and where.

These are decisions and plans that will take time. In the coming months, snow will make much of the road slippery and, at times, impassable again.

"We need to start today," he said.





THE NEW YORK TIMES

A digger fixing the road on the Tizi N'Test Pass after a deadly earthquake in the High Atlas Mountains, left. Giant boulders had blocked the way after the earthquake, leaving villagers to dig through the destroyed houses for survivors on their own.

Biden and Netanyahu Emphasize U.S.-Israeli Unity on Curbing Iran

From Page A1

set off one of the worst domestic crises in Israeli history.

Mr. Biden also pushed Mr. Netanyahu to preserve the possibility of creating a Palestinian state, implicitly criticizing several recent moves by Mr. Netanyahu's government to entrench Israeli control of the West Bank.

"Today we're going to discuss some of the hard issues: upholding democratic values that lie at the heart of our partnership, including checks and balances in our systems, and preserving the path to a negotiated two-state solution," Mr. Biden said at the start of the meeting.

His comments reflected the deep unease in Washington over Mr. Netanyahu's efforts to reduce the power of Israel's judiciary.

U.S. officials are also unhappy about Mr. Netanyahu's plans to build record numbers of Israeli homes and buildings in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, and to retroactively legalize unauthorized settlements built in the territory by Israeli civilians. Both actions will make it harder to create a Palestinian state, and also risk making Saudi Arabia warier of reaching a deal with Israel.

The meeting was private — and Mr. Biden and Mr. Netanyahu spent about 15 minutes alone, without aides — but U.S. and Israeli officials later said it focused on Iran's nuclear enrichment program, which both men oppose but disagree on how to combat, and U.S.-led efforts to normalize relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

In the moments before the meeting began, Mr. Biden said to Mr. Netanyahu: "If you and I, 10 years ago, were talking about normalization with Saudi Arabia, I think we'd look at each other like, 'Who's been drinking what?'"

Like most Arab countries, Saudi Arabia has never recognized Israel, avoiding diplomatic ties out of solidarity with the Palestinians. But since late last year, the United States has been trying to broker a landmark normalization deal between the two countries, one that would see Saudi Arabia establishing relations with Israel in exchange for the United States supporting a civil nuclear program on Saudi soil and providing Riyadh with greater military support.

To secure the deal, Israel will need to make some concessions to the Palestinians, such as ceding them more land in the West Bank. But senior members of Mr. Netanyahu's government — the most ultranationalist in Israeli history — are strongly opposed to such gestures, making it harder to forge a deal.

In an interview with Bret Baier of Fox News, excepts of which were released on Wednesday, the Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, made the kingdom's concern clear. "For us, the Palestinian issue is very important," he said. "We need to solve that part."

Mr. Biden used the meeting to press the prime minister to do more to support the normalization process, White House officials said.

A description of the meeting released by the White House after it was over said Mr. Biden had called on Mr. Netanyahu to "take immediate measures to improve the security and economic situation, maintain the viability of a two-state solution, and promote a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians."

A senior Biden administration official, who spoke to reporters after the meeting on the condition of anonymity, said there was "a common understanding" among all the leaders in the region, including Mr. Netanyahu, that any normalization of relations with the Saudis would require dealing with the Palestinian issue.

The official said that during the meeting, there was a "basic meeting of the minds" about both the importance of the issue and also about the contours of what would be required.

But administration officials have said they recognize that Mr. Netanyahu operates within the constraints of his governing coalition, which includes ultranationalist members who oppose giving more sovereignty to the Palestinians. A senior Israeli official said that Mr. Netanyahu told Mr. Biden that the Palestinians should be included in the deal, but not given the right to veto it.

The statement from the White House said that Mr. Biden had urged the prime minister and others to fulfill commitments — made to the Palestinian leadership at meetings brokered earlier this year by the United States — to deescalate tensions in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. He also stressed to Mr. Netanyahu the need to refrain from "further unilateral measures," a reference to building new settlements.

Though the two leaders have worked together for decades and describe each other as friends, Mr. Biden has described Mr. Netanyahu's current governing coalition as "one of the most extremist" in Israeli history.

Back home, a photograph with the president may offer Mr. Netanyahu an opportunity to build a new narrative: to present himself as a statesman, remind Israelis of his extensive diplomatic experience, and suggest that the recent frictions with Mr. Biden have ebbed.

Discussing efforts for normalization with Saudi Arabia.

But Mr. Netanyahu's critics, hundreds of whom protested outside the hotel, said the meeting should not distract from Mr. Netanyahu's attempt to weaken the judiciary.

"You can have as many talks as you want and have all your slick interviews, but we don't forget what you're doing back in Israel," said Inbal Biton, 48, an Israeli tech worker who joined the crowds of protesters outside the meeting.

In the meeting, Mr. Biden did not back away from his earlier criticism of the judicial overhaul. According to the White House description of the meeting, Mr. Biden "reiterated his concern about any fundamental changes to Israel's democratic system, absent the broadest possible consensus."

Mr. Netanyahu attempted to assuage Mr. Biden's concerns about both his commitment to democracy and peace with the Palestinians.

"One thing is certain and will never change, and that is Israel's commitment to democracy," Mr. Netanyahu said before their meeting began. "We will continue to hold the values that our two proud democracies hold dear."

He also praised Mr. Biden's efforts to mediate between Israel and Saudi Arabia. Successful talks, he said, will "bring an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict, bring about reconciliation between the Islamic world and the Jewish state and promote real peace between Israel and the Palestinians."

Mr. Netanyahu's message, however, was undermined by an earlier announcement by 11 lawmakers from his right-wing party, Likud. In a statement released on Wednesday, the lawmakers said they would block efforts to give land to the Palestinians in exchange for peace with Saudi Arabia.

But however unhappy the White House may be with the tactics of the Netanyahu coalition, the U.S.-Israel relationship, which has broad bipartisan support, appears as steady as ever.

U.S. officials see Israel as a key military partner in the Middle East, providing Israel with nearly $4 billion in military aid every year, and giving it strong diplomatic support at the United Nations Security Council.

"I don't see anything material changing," said Dov Zakheim, a former senior U.S. official who follows U.S.-Israeli relations. "We don't just help the Israelis because we love them. We help Israel because it's the most powerful military in the region."

Gabby Sobelman contributed reporting from Rehovot, Israel.



DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and President Biden spoke privately for about 15 minutes on Wednesday at a hotel near the United Nations.

Azerbaijan Says It Has Regained Control of a Breakaway Armenian Enclave

By IVAN NECHEPURENKO and ANTON TROIANOVSKI

YEREVAN, Armenia — Azerbaijan said on Wednesday that it had restored full control over a breakaway Armenian enclave, a development that could create thousands of new refugees and spell the end of decades of Armenian efforts to assert sovereignty in the mountainous Caucasus region.

Addressing his nation, President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan asserted that pro-Armenian authorities had surrendered after just two days of fighting in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, which has been under the control of Armenian separatists for more than three decades.

"Karabakh is Azerbaijan," the emboldened leader declared at the end of the address, putting his fist in the air.

Nagorno-Karabakh, slightly bigger than Rhode Island in area, is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, but it is home to tens of thousands of Armenians who stayed after a 2020 cease-fire and are under the protection of Russian peacekeepers.

The return of the enclave to Azerbaijani rule is likely to alter power dynamics in the South Caucasus, a region that for centuries has been at the crossroads of geopolitical interests of Russia, Turkey and Western nations.

The Armenian separatists' surrender could hasten the decline of Russian influence in the Caucasus, where Moscow's role as an arbiter in the decades-old Nagorno-Karabakh conflict made it a pivotal power. It could also threaten instability in Armenia, where Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has sought to build closer ties with the West despite a military alliance with Russia.

But wider implications aside, the surrender will have very specific consequences for the lives of the tens of thousands of Armenians who live in the area. Many are adamantly against Azerbaijani rule, which they fear could result in repercussions for those who fought against Azerbaijan.

Mr. Aliyev said that Azerbaijani authorities would meet with representatives of the breakaway government on Thursday to the discuss reintegration of Armenians under Azerbaijani rule.

The hostilities escalated on Tuesday when Azerbaijan launched a military operation in Nagorno-Karabakh. The Armenian separatist authorities said at least 27 people had been killed.

Thousands of Armenians flocked to the main square in Yerevan, the country's capital, on Wednesday to protest the decision by the government — which is separate from Nagorno-Karabakh's pro-Armenian authorities — to avoid getting involved in the conflict.

"International countries must impose sanctions on Azerbaijan; otherwise, it will result in genocide," said Oksana Balayan, 23, whose parents and other relatives were stuck in Stepanakert, the capital of the breakaway region. Ms. Balayan said it was impossible for Armenians to come under Azerbaijani rule, citing multiple examples of grievances.

"Without Artsakh, there won't be Armenia," Ms. Balayan said, using the Armenian name for Nagorno-Karabakh.

But the protest lacked a clear alternative leader and plan, and many people in the crowd spoke with resignation.

At the same time, in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, emboldened authorities radiated confidence. Speaking at a briefing with reporters and diplomats, Hikmet Hajiyev, a presidential assistant on international affairs, said that the Azerbaijani government received assurances that the pro-Armenian "forces on the ground will disarm themselves."

He said the process would be done in coordination with Russian peacekeepers, who, he said, "played their important role with regard to ensuring safety on the ground."

But the role of Russian peacekeepers will most likely wane as Azerbaijan reasserts its control over the region. The loss of Nagorno-Karabakh also prompted many in Armenia to question the traditional view that Russia was their main protector in a region where great power interests collide.

Azerbaijan's assault this week had prompted fears that it could mark the beginning of a third war with Armenia since the Soviet Union's collapse — after a yearslong war in the 1990s that left Armenia in control of the territory and seven surrounding districts, and a 44-day conflict in 2020, in which Azerbaijan recaptured much of its land.

But the events moved swiftly as it became clear that without much outside help, the separatists had little chance to stand against Azerbaijan, a country that used its oil and gas income to revamp its army into a potent force.

Early Wednesday, in a statement carried by the Azerbaijani state news agency Azertac, the country's defense ministry said that it had agreed to halt its "antiterror measures" in Nagorno-Karabakh after the separatist government there agreed that its forces would lay down their arms and withdraw from their battle positions.

Around the same time, the Armenian separatist government issued its own statement declaring that it had accepted a Russia-brokered cease-fire after Azerbaijani forces managed to break through Armenian positions and "take control of a number of heights and strategic road junctions."

Russian peacekeepers reported no violations since the cease-fire came into force. In a video address, Mr. Pashinyan, the prime minister of Armenia, said that there had been a "steep decline" in the fighting, but that it had not ended, according to Russia's Interfax news agency.

Speaking in Moscow after the cease-fire was announced, President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia said, "We are in close contact with all sides of the conflict."

"I hope that we will be able to achieve de-escalation and to transfer the resolution of this problem into a peaceful channel," Mr. Putin said.

Later in the evening, Mr. Putin spoke with Mr. Pashinyan, welcoming "the agreement reached with the active participation of Russian peacekeepers on a complete cessation of hostilities."

But the situation remained fragile, as several Russian peacekeepers were killed on Wednesday, the country's defense ministry said, when their car came under small-arms fire while returning from an observation point in Nagorno-Karabakh. The ministry did not specify how many died or who might have shot at them.

The statement from the authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh signaled that they were relenting in part because neighboring Armenia did not send troops to their aid and because Russian peacekeepers did not try to interfere with Azerbaijan's assault.

"In the current situation, the actions of the international community toward ending the war and resolving the situation are insufficient," the Armenian separatist government said in its statement.

Mr. Pashinyan said in his address on Wednesday that the Armenian government had played no role in drafting the cease-fire and that his country had no troops in Nagorno-Karabakh, according to news agency reports. And the Kremlin's spokesman, Dmitri S. Peskov, signaled that Russia did not see Azerbaijan's actions as a violation of international law.

"De jure, we are talking about actions of the Azerbaijani side on its own territory," Mr. Peskov told reporters.

Nagorno-Karabakh declared its independence as the Soviet Union collapsed in the 1990s. And even as other countries urged an end to the fighting, there appeared to be little they could do to prevent Mr. Aliyev from getting his way. The United States secretary of state, Antony J. Blinken, held separate calls on Tuesday with the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

If the fighting does stop, the fate of the tens of thousands of ethnic Armenians still living in Nagorno-Karabakh is likely to emerge as an explosive and painful question after decades of interethnic violence. While Mr. Aliyev has demanded that Armenians there recognize Azerbaijani rule, many Armenians accuse Azerbaijan of seeking to carry out a policy of ethnic cleansing.

"It is very important that this current military operation is not used as a pretext to force the exodus of the local population from Karabakh, of the Karabakh Armenians," said Peter Stano, the European Union's spokesman on foreign affairs.

Monika Pronczuk contributed reporting.



NAGORNO-KARABAKH HUMAN RIGHTS OMBUDSMAN, VIA AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Stepanakert, capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, was under a cease-fire announced on Wednesday.

Zelensky Implores U.N. to Revoke Russia's Veto Power

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Five nations — the United States, Russia, China, France and Britain — are permanent members and have veto power, meaning that no action that any of them objects to stands a chance. The other 10 seats rotate among more than 170 other member countries, as chosen by their peers, which do not wield vetoes.

Mr. Zelensky advocated changing U.N. rules to allow the General Assembly, which is made up of all member countries, to override a Security Council veto by a two-thirds vote. But that change would, itself, be subject to a veto, making it a nonstarter for the foreseeable future.

Notably, neither Mr. Blinken nor Deputy Prime Minister Oliver Dowden of Britain, whose countries would be averse to seeing their own powers watered down, addressed Mr. Zelensky's proposal in their speeches. But many other countries have raised the issue of recasting the Security Council this week, calling for broader and more equitable representation for them, and at least limitations on veto power, if not its abolition.

"I think that Zelensky believes that by talking about U.N. reform, he is turning Ukraine's battle into a global cause," Richard Gowan, the U.N. director for the International Crisis Group, said in an interview. "He is certainly right that a lot of U.N. members believe that the council is out of date and needs reform, and the veto is especially unpopular. But council reform is also a diplomatic hornet's nest, and the procedural and political obstacles to reorganizing the council or changing veto rules are prohibitively high."

Mr. Zelensky argued that the United Nations was wrong to allow the privileges of the Soviet Union, after it collapsed, to be inherited in the 1990s by Russia, "which, for some reason, is still here among the permanent members of the Security Council." He called Russian diplomats "liars whose job is to whitewash the aggression and genocide."

As he spoke, the Russian ambassador, Vasily A. Nebenzya, looked down at his phone and tapped at its screen.

Even as the Security Council prepared to meet, Russian forces struck the largest oil refinery in central Ukraine. And an explosion shook a cargo ship in the Black Sea near the border of Romania and Ukraine; it was not clear what caused the blast.

Russia found little resembling support at the Security Council, denounced not only by council members but also by Secretary General António Guterres and leaders of many other nations who were given permission to attend and address the session. They reiterated that Russia's invasion and the atrocities that have followed are violations of the U.N. charter and other international laws.

"It's hard to imagine a country demonstrating more contempt for the United Nations," Mr. Blinken said.

He spoke of his emotional visit to the town of Yahidne, Ukraine, and meeting some of the hundreds of civilians who had been held in a crowded, unsanitary basement there by Russian troops for 28 days early in the war. Some people died there, he said, including a 6-week-old baby.

"In this war, there is an aggressor and a victim," he said.

Mr. Lavrov repeated the false claim that Ukraine is controlled by "neo-Nazis" and recited the Kremlin's case that the conflict is the fault of the United States, for meddling in Ukrainian politics over the last two decades, and of Ukraine, for abusing and discriminating against Russian speakers.

The ousters in 2004 and 2014 of pro-Russian governments in Kyiv were purely the work of the West, he argued. This is a consistent theme for President Vladimir V. Putin's Russia — that smaller nations that align with the West or oppose Russia must be taking orders from Washington and its allies. Mr. Lavrov even said that the United States should "command" Mr. Zelensky to negotiate.

Mr. Zelensky pushed once again for his plan for peace with Russia, but that, too, is a nonstarter, at least for now, requiring Russia to withdraw all of its troops and paramilitary forces. Similarly, Russia says its annexation of Ukrainian territory is nonnegotiable.

At the start of the meeting, Mr. Nebenzya, the Russian ambassador, engaged in a lengthy procedural argument with Edi Rama, the prime minister of Albania, who was conducting the meeting because his country holds the council's rotating presidency. Mr. Nebenzya objected to Mr. Zelensky being allowed to speak before the council members.

"There is a solution, if you agree," Mr. Rama replied. "You stop the war, and President Zelensky will not take the floor."

Neil MacFarquhar contributed reporting.



MIKE SEGAR/REUTERS



BRENDAN McDERMID/REUTERS



BRENDAN McDERMID/REUTERS

"Ukrainian soldiers are doing with their blood what the U.N. Security Council should do by its voting," President Volodymyr Zelensky, top, said on Wednesday. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov of Russia, left, spoke later, as did Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken.

Cargo Ship Is Damaged In Explosion Off Romania

By CONSTANT MÉHEUT

The crew of a cargo ship sailing across the Black Sea was rescued and evacuated to the Romanian port of Sulina, near the border with Ukraine, after the ship was damaged by an explosion, the Romanian authorities said on Wednesday.

The cause of the explosion was unknown. Romania's prime minister, Marcel Ciolacu, suggested in a news conference that the ship could have been damaged by a mine, but he did not offer any evidence for the claim. Since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February last year, both countries have littered the Black Sea with explosive devices.

Romania's transport and infrastructure minister, Sorin Grindeanu, said at the news conference that there were two hypotheses for what could have caused the damage: a sea mine or an explosion in the engine room. Mr. Ciolacu said that the hypothesis about the mine was "closer to the truth," but he did not elaborate.

Earlier in the day, the Romanian news media reported that Cosmin Dumitrache, the head of the Romanian Naval Authority, had said that there were "no concrete indications that a mine could be the cause" of the explosion. Investigations about the cause of the explosion were continuing, the authorities said.

A day before the explosion, a ship loaded with wheat sailed for the first time on a new Black Sea route put in place by Ukraine to circumvent a Russian blockade. The Ukrainian authorities hailed the news as proof that ships could navigate safely in and out of Ukrainian waters, but experts cautioned that the risks remained high. The ship damaged on Wednesday was headed for a different route that circumvents Ukraine's Black Sea ports by using the Danube River.

Russia and Ukraine have escalated their fight in the Black Sea in recent months, drawing the war closer to Romania, a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Russia has targeted Ukrainian ports and grain facilities on the Danube, just across the river from Romania, and Ukraine has battled to control strategic oil and gas platforms in the northwestern part of the Black Sea a few dozen miles off Romania.

The fighting has raised fears that it could drag NATO into a direct military confrontation with Moscow. The alliance's commitment to mutual defense considers an attack on one member as an attack on all. This month, debris from what the Romanian authorities said could be Russian drones was found on Romanian territory, following attacks on nearby Ukrainian ports. But Romania has avoided any suggestion that it might invoke the joint defense pact over the debris.

The explosion on Wednesday caused serious damage to the ship and put it at risk of sinking, Romanian officials said. Mr. Grindeanu, the transport minister, said that a tugboat had been deployed to take the vessel closer to shore to prevent it from going down.

The Romanian authorities said the crew of the Togo-registered vessel, the Seama, reported the explosion around 6:50 a.m. local time and that Romanian sea rescuers picked up the crew members about 30 minutes later. The Romanian media reported that one crew member was injured.

Marius Gelu Roibu, the head of Romania's sea rescue agency, the M.R.C.C., said in an interview that 12 crew members were brought to the port of Sulina for medical care.

The MarineTraffic website, which tracks global shipping using satellite data, showed that the ship had departed from the Turkish Black Sea port of Bartin. The Romanian Naval Authority said in a statement that the ship was transporting cement and had arrived in Sulina's harbor Sept. 12.

The explosion occurred while it was waiting near the maritime border between Romania and Ukraine, about seven nautical miles east of Sulina, to enter the Bystroe Canal, which connects the Danube delta to the Black Sea. It was unclear whether the ship had entered Ukrainian waters when the explosion occurred.

Ukraine has increasingly used the Danube River as an alternative waterway to trade internationally because of Russia's Black Sea blockade.

Romania's defense ministry said in a statement that it had dispatched a minesweeper to the area with divers who specialize in explosive devices. The Romanian news agency Agerpress reported last month that since the start of the war, Romanian naval forces had neutralized five sea mines that had strayed into Romanian waters.

McCarthy Declines to Allow Ukraine Leader to Address House

By KAROUN DEMIRJIAN

WASHINGTON — Speaker Kevin McCarthy, facing a right-wing rebellion in his ranks and mounting G.O.P. resistance to aiding Ukraine, has declined to convene a forum for President Volodymyr Zelensky to address members of the House on Thursday during a visit to Capitol Hill.

While Mr. McCarthy was expected to meet with Mr. Zelensky privately, his decision not to host a meeting where the Ukrainian president could make a direct appeal to rank-and-file lawmakers underscores the deep Republican divisions over continued U.S. assistance for Kyiv's fight against the Russian invasion.

It also reflects Mr. McCarthy's own precarious position as he faces ire from the right wing over federal spending and stepped-up threats to oust him if he does not embrace its members' priorities, which include cutting off money for Ukraine.

The situation stands in contrast to the reception Mr. Zelensky is receiving in the Senate, where Senator Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York and the majority leader, has organized a closed-door session at the Capitol for all 100 senators. House lawmakers who are interested in hearing directly from Mr. Zelensky will instead have to leave Capitol Hill; members of the Congressional Ukraine Caucus and others were expected to meet with him at the National Archives on Thursday.

Mr. Zelensky's visit comes as dozens of Republicans are opposing President Biden's latest request of $24 billion for additional military and humanitarian aid for Ukraine's war.

Mr. Zelensky, whose tour of Washington follows appearances before world leaders at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, is widely considered to be his country's most skilled and powerful advocate when it comes to securing international support for Ukraine's fight against the larger and more heavily armed invading Russian forces.

The comedic actor turned wartime president cemented his status with many lawmakers late last year when he addressed Congress from the well of the House with a public plea to fund the transfer of critical munitions and weapons systems. He portrayed the war as an existential standoff between a Russian-Iranian axis and the West, and assured skeptics that "your money is not charity." The next day, Congress approved a spending bill that included $45 billion in assistance for Ukraine.

But Mr. Zelensky's latest visit comes in a far more fraught political environment. A third of House Republicans have voted to curtail Ukraine spending in recent months, while a bloc of more than 40 right-wing hard-liners has threatened to boycott any spending bill that includes a "blank check" for Ukraine.

A small band of Republican holdouts has prevented the Senate and the House from moving spending bills through their respective chambers. And instead of rolling out the red carpet for the Ukrainian president, Mr. McCarthy — who just months ago spoke forcefully about his commitment to Kyiv — now says Mr. Zelensky must convince him that supporting the fight against Russia is worth Congress's money and time.

"Is Zelensky elected to Congress? Is he our president? I don't think I have to commit anything," Mr. McCarthy told reporters on Tuesday. "Where is the accountability on the money we already spent? What is the plan for victory? I think that's what the American public wants to know."

Mr. McCarthy's hostility to approving additional funds for Ukraine has been mounting in recent months, as his increasingly emboldened right flank has revolted over a deal he struck with Mr. Biden this spring setting spending limits in exchange for suspending the debt limit. Despite having previously stated that he supported Ukraine's fight against Russia, Mr. McCarthy declared himself in June to be opposed to budgeting additional dollars for it, and this week he endorsed a spending measure drafted by conservative and moderate Republicans that would allot no additional funding for assisting Kyiv.

The stance has put Mr. McCarthy out of step with other Republican leaders, like Senator Mitch McConnell, the minority leader, as well as the bulk of his own members in the House. They have argued that helping Ukrainian troops by budgeting for a steady flow of weapons is a moral imperative, and that Mr. Zelensky could help persuade their more skeptical colleagues of that necessity, if only the speaker would give him the chance.

Mr. Zelensky "could come and explain to them what's at stake," said Representative Mike Simpson, Republican of Idaho, who said it was a mistake not to give Mr. Zelensky a chance to try to change naysayers' minds. "Because I don't think some people understand what's at stake here."

Representative Don Bacon, Republican of Nebraska, also said Mr. Zelensky needed the chance to persuade skeptics to drop their opposition.

"His country's a victim; Russia's the invader," Mr. Bacon said. "To me I have total moral clarity that we should stand by Ukraine. So I just think if he speaks, if he can persuade a few people, it's worth it."

Critics of Ukraine assistance, however, said there was little Mr. Zelensky could say to change their thinking.

"No," said Representative Kat Cammack, Republican of Florida, when asked if Mr. Zelensky might be able to persuade her to reconsider her opposition. "I am very firmly in the camp of an America-first policy when it comes to funding of the government and ensuring we have the means here to support our national defense."

In the Senate, several skeptics have said they did not plan to attend the Thursday morning session where Mr. Zelensky will make his remarks.

"He's going to come over to make the case that he needs more help," said Senator Mike Braun, Republican of Indiana. "I'm going to be the one that says, 'If you want more help from us, the E.U. ought to be doing their fair share.'"

That leaves Mr. Zelensky to try to make his case in a relative void, and on a tight deadline: The administration's authority to dispatch weapons to Ukraine ends on Sept. 30, at the end of the fiscal year.



PETE MAROVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Speaker Kevin McCarthy is under pressure by right-wing members to cut off spending on Ukraine.

It was no time to linger. In a wooded area on the front lines of the Donbas region, Ukrainian soldiers came out of concealment to shell Russian forces.

Earlier that morning, Ukrainian drones had spotted bunkers and other targets at Russian positions beyond the tree line. Soldiers readied a recoilless rifle and got to work.

The SPG-9 recoilless rifle sends shells arcing at high speed toward targets a thousand or more yards away and leaves spent charges in its wake.



The netting on their helmets helped the Ukrainian soldiers hide from the enemy. The green tape was a way for others to recognize them as comrades.

With the targets out of sight beyond the trees, the soldiers could not immediately be sure what they had hit. But after firing a half-dozen shells, and with the odds of a Russian response climbing, one thing was clear: It was time to go.

TYLER HICKS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

IN ONE IMAGE

Load. Fire. Get to Cover.

By TYLER HICKS

"Today, the situation is very bad."

For weeks, this forest in the Donbas region had been fairly calm, but this morning, with the Russians on the offensive, things were heating up again, said a Ukrainian deputy commander named Yevgen who was escorting journalists for The New York Times.

It was Aug. 9, and soldiers from the 95th Air Assault Brigade were set up under pine trees that in more peaceful times might have shaded mushroom hunters rather than men in camouflage.

The outpost that day was a swarm of activity. New soldiers were rotating in, and others were rotating out. There was a steady stream of incoming artillery and mortar rounds.

Then orders came in, and several Ukrainian soldiers went to their SPG-9 recoilless rifle. The weapon, which is more like a rocket launcher than a rifle, sends shells arcing at high speed toward targets a thousand or more yards away.

As the men worked, the air in the forest was pierced by the sounds of radio chatter, soldiers shouting to one another and the roar of incoming and outgoing fire.

When Yevgen gave the order to fire, flames gushed out of the SPG-9 and dust rose into the air, engulfing the men — and offering any Russians who might have been watching a telltale signature to target.

They repeated the process several more times, removing spent propellant charges from the rear of the gun, tossing them aside and sliding in fresh projectiles. As their radios chirped new instructions, they adjusted their trajectory. Then the weapon — that one, anyway — fell silent.

Yevgen offered a salute and his men sought safety, or the closest thing to it one could hope for on the front lines. The gun was concealed again. Until the next time. And then the commander turned to his visitors.

"OK. Time to go."



Sunak Softens Britain's Climate Change Targets as Election Approaches

By STEPHEN CASTLE

LONDON — After years of claiming leadership in the international fight against climate change, Britain's government on Wednesday gambled on an abrupt change of course, weakening key environmental pledges and promising lower costs for Britons who will soon be asked to vote in a general election.

Brushing aside sharp criticism from business leaders, environmentalists and some of his own Conservative lawmakers, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said he would stick to Britain's overall goals for achieving net zero by 2050 but would do so in what he described as a more "sensible" way.

"It cannot be right for Westminster to impose such significant costs on working people," said Mr. Sunak, referring to the seat of Britain's government. He added, "If we continue down this path we risk losing the consent of the British people."

Mr. Sunak said that he would delay by five years a ban on the sale of gas and diesel cars, lower targets for replacing gas boilers and would propose no new measures to discourage passengers from taking airplanes or to encourage carpooling.

Analysts said the significant shift in policy was designed to set a dividing line between the government and the opposition Labour Party ahead of a general election that Mr. Sunak must call by January 2025. Labour, led by Keir Starmer, has maintained a double-digit lead in the polls for months, and Mr. Sunak's own ratings have fallen since he became prime minister last October.

The new thinking in Downing Street seems to have crystallized after the Conservatives won a surprise victory in July in a parliamentary election in northwest London when they campaigned against moves by the city's Labour mayor to expand an air-quality initiative that charges drivers of older, more polluting vehicles.

Tom Burke, the chairman of E3G, an environmental research group, said that Mr. Sunak was seeking to send a political signal that his party supports car owners and those in economically stressed parts of the country, many of whom switched from Labour to the Conservatives in the 2019 general election.

"The point of this is to put Starmer in a trap of having to choose between the left-behind voters who he needs to win back, and the young green urbanites who are his natural supporters," said Mr. Burke, who has advised three former Conservative environment secretaries.

He added, however, that Mr. Sunak's shift was a "strategic error" that had revealed "the split inside the Tory Party" over climate action.

The new policy risks alienating large sections of the electorate at a time of growing public awareness of global warming, after Europe experienced record heat and devastating wildfires and floods this summer. Polling shows there is a broad consensus within Britain on the need for climate action.

The timing was jarring internationally, coming as the United Nations General Assembly — from which Mr. Sunak was notably absent — discussed climate protection policy. Earlier this year, the body's secretary general, António Guterres, warned that the era of global warming had ended and "the era of global boiling has arrived."

The announcement also coincided with King Charles III's state visit to France, which is intended to underscore the areas in which the two countries are working together, including on climate policy, a particular interest of the British monarch.

Mr. Sunak defended his position by arguing that Britain was doing more than other nations. "When our share of global emissions is less than 1 percent how can it be right that British citizens are now being told to sacrifice even more than others?"

Several lawmakers on the right of his party, and Britain's influential right-wing newspapers, praised the new approach and noted that the new, delayed, target of 2035 for the ban on sale of new gas and diesel cars is the same as that of the European Union.

But prominent critics included former Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who said that "business must have certainty about our net zero commitments" and that "we cannot afford to falter now or in any way lose our ambition for this country."

A ban on the sale of gas and diesel cars will be delayed.

Chris Skidmore, a Conservative lawmaker, told the BBC that the changes were "potentially the greatest mistake" of Mr. Sunak's tenure so far, adding that "delivering on net zero provides a benefit not a cost."

Perhaps worse for Mr. Sunak was an angry response from Ford U.K., whose chair, Lisa Brankin, issued a statement regarding the delayed ban on new gas- and diesel-only cars that said: "Our business needs three things from the U.K. government: ambition, commitment and consistency. A relaxation of 2030 would undermine all three."

Automakers have made significant investments in Britain to meet the 2030 deadline. In July, Tata, the Indian conglomerate that owns Jaguar Land Rover, said it would build a battery plant in western England, a four-billion-pound (roughly $5 billion) project subsidized with government funds. And earlier this month BMW announced a $750 million investment to build electric Minis in Britain. Its plans called for converting an Oxford assembly plant to produce electric vehicles exclusively by 2030.

Those investments were a result of government policies promoting the transition to electric vehicles, said Mike Hawes, the chief executive of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, an industry group, in a statement on Wednesday. He said government must provide a "clear, consistent message" to help car buyers make the switch to electric.

"Confusion and uncertainty will only hold them back," he said.

James Alexander, chief executive of the U.K. Sustainable Investment and Finance Association, warned that Britain risked falling further behind in a global race to secure investment for the green transition to net zero if the government hurts investors' confidence.

Just a couple of years ago, Britain was "very clearly a global leader on sustainability and driving the global agenda," but "the government has backed firmly away from this direction of travel," Mr. Alexander said. "And investors follow policymakers' signals."

Mr. Burke noted that most of the policy changes — including the deadline change for the ban on gas and diesel cars — would do nothing to reduce daily costs for voters in the short term, could cost Mr. Sunak support among more centrist swing voters in the south and would cause division within his own party. "Parties that are split rarely get elected and this is a party that's completely split," he said.

But the policy shift seemed to give a foretaste of the combative general election campaign that the Conservative Party seems to be planning next year.

Talking to the BBC on Wednesday the home secretary, Suella Braverman, put the party's new position bluntly: "We are not going to save the planet by bankrupting the British people."

Stanley Reed and Eshe Nelson contributed reporting.

U.S. and China Shunned At U.N. Climate Summit

By MAX BEARAK

The United Nations' secretary general, António Guterres, convened a special summit on Wednesday in New York City designed to highlight the efforts of the most ambitious global leaders on climate policy — and to implicitly shame those who are dragging their feet.

Mr. Guterres, who has made climate action a centerpiece of his agenda and has called on the world's largest carbon emitters to rapidly shift away from burning fossil fuels, the main driver of global warming, pledged that only high-level leaders whom he sees as taking climate action seriously would be allowed to speak at the event.

That did not include the leaders of the world's two biggest polluters, China and the United States.

"Climate action is dwarfed by the scale of the challenge," Mr. Guterres said in his opening remarks at the summit. "We must make up time lost to foot-dragging, arm-twisting and the naked greed of entrenched interests raking in billions from fossil fuels."

The Climate Ambition Summit, as the event was called, was held on the sidelines of the annual General Assembly and included leaders of countries, states, cities and companies, and coincided with a U.N. Security Council meeting on the war in Ukraine, which for a second year has dominated the assembly's agenda.

The summit was a nod by Mr. Guterres to increasing frustration from smaller and poorer countries that the war has been distracting richer nations from pledges they have made to help developing countries, most of which bear little responsibility for the emissions warming the planet, manage the risks of climate change and transition to renewable energy.

"I hope that, in the same way we can take Ukraine seriously in the Security Council, we can talk climate change there, too," said Mia Mottley, the prime minister of Barbados, who has been one of the most outspoken world leaders on climate issues. "This is, in fact, a greater threat because more lives are at stake globally."

Of the world's four biggest emitters, only the European Union was invited to speak at the summit. Top leaders from China and India, which are also the world's most populous countries, did not attend the United Nations meetings this week at all, let alone the climate meeting, furthering a sense that the world body is facing a crisis of confidence under the weight of cascading global emergencies.

Despite its emphasis on ambition, the summit yielded few new concrete pledges. Canada and some European Union countries said they would either allocate more of their budgets to climate finance in the developing world or reallocate special access they had to funds from international lending institutions to poorer countries.

The only official from the United States invited to speak was Gov. Gavin Newsom of California, who has signed a slew of climate measures and recently announced that California would sue Big Oil, accusing the industry of years of disinformation campaigns.

Mr. Newsom's speech drew the loudest applause, presumably because it did what many others studiously did not: It confronted fossil fuel producers.

"This climate crisis is a fossil fuel crisis. It's not complicated," he said. "It's the burning of oil, the burning of gas, the burning of coal. We need to call that out. For decades, the oil industry has been playing each and everyone in this room for fools. Their deceit and denial going back decades has created the conditions that persist here today."



SARAH YENESEL/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

At the special U.N. Climate Ambition Summit, leaders of the United States and China were pointedly not invited to speak.

The summit is a precursor to the annual United Nations climate talks known as COP, which start a little more than two months from now in the United Arab Emirates. The Emirates' status as one of the world's biggest fossil fuel producers has deepened a credibility crisis for the COP meetings, which have in recent years repeatedly failed to drive consensus around some of the world's most pressing climate issues.

This year's COP will have to contend with a report, created at its own instigation, that says that current climate pledges would put the world on track for a hazardous rise of global average temperatures of 2.5 degrees Celsius by 2100, assuming nations followed through on their current pledges.

The window for keeping warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, generally considered to be the goal of the climate talks, is "rapidly narrowing," the report said.

The tone of many of the speeches at the climate summit on Wednesday attempted hopefulness, even if they alluded to the increasingly visible cost of inaction in climate-induced emergencies around the world.

But the most compelling calls to action were given by leaders like President Gabriel Boric of Chile, a firebrand young socialist who said the self-congratulation in the room made him feel like delegates were all just trying to help themselves sleep better at night. The only way through this crisis, he said, was unrelenting pressure on laggards, be they fossil fuel companies or countries reluctant to wean themselves from fossil fuels.

"If we're not able to make those groups yield to the will of the international community, then the truth is we won't hit our targets," Mr. Boric said.

London Police Officer Is Charged With Murder in Shooting of a Black Driver

By AARON BOXERMAN

LONDON — British prosecutors announced a murder charge on Wednesday for a police officer accused of fatally shooting a Black man in south London last year during a botched arrest operation, a rare move in a case that has prompted calls for greater police accountability.

Chris Kaba, 24, was killed while driving his car through the south London district of Streatham Hill last September. The shooting prompted widespread outrage in London's Black community amid plummeting public trust in the city's police force, which has been dogged by accusations of racism and misogyny.

The police first flagged Mr. Kaba's car after an automatic license plate tracker identified it as being potentially linked to a firearm incident, according to the Independent Office for Police Conduct, a watchdog that handles complaints against officers in Britain.

Officers in unmarked vehicles then pursued Mr. Kaba for about 15 minutes without turning on their headlights or sirens, investigators said. After he turned left at an intersection toward a waiting marked police vehicle, armed officers exited their vehicles to arrest him.

The officer — identified only as NX121 — fired a single shot that pierced the car's windshield and struck Mr. Kaba in the head, fatally wounding him, according to investigators. At some point during the confrontation, Mr. Kaba's car also struck one of the police cars, investigators said.

Mr. Kaba was unarmed, according to his family and lawyers. The police watchdog said that "no non-police-issue firearm" was present on the scene.

The shooting of Mr. Kaba — who his family said was soon to become a first-time father — prompted hundreds to rally in front of New Scotland Yard, the headquarters of London's Metropolitan Police Service, to demand that the police be held accountable.

Mr. Kaba's family hailed the decision to charge the officer involved, who is set to appear in court in London on Thursday.

"Chris was so very loved by our family and all his friends. He had a bright future ahead of him, but his life was cut short," the Kaba family said on Wednesday in a statement provided by their legal team. "Our family and our wider community must see justice for Chris."

In a statement on Wednesday, the police said the officer had been suspended from duty. The courts were considering whether to continue to grant the officer anonymity, the police said.



MAJA SMIEJKOWSKA/REUTERS

Black Lives Matter protesters demonstrating outside New Scotland Yard headquarters last year.

The police have "supported the I.O.P.C. investigation as it has worked to establish the facts," said Helen Millichap, the London police's deputy assistant commissioner for local policing.

"Our thoughts are with everyone affected by this case," she added.

The Metropolitan Police Service, informally known as the Met, oversees law enforcement in London but has been dogged by accusations of discrimination and by high-profile cases of police criminality.

In 2021, a police officer pleaded guilty to the rape and murder of Sarah Everard, 33, a crime that horrified Britain and prompted an outcry against the police force. In February, another police officer, David Carrick, was sentenced to life in prison for what prosecutors called "a relentless campaign of sexually and mentally abusing women."

A wide-ranging government report said this year that the Met was troubled by falling public faith in the institution, widespread racism and misogyny, and a lack of transparency. In response, the police force announced what it described as its "largest reform of culture and standards in decades" on Tuesday. Over 100 Metropolitan Police officers had been dismissed for gross misconduct over the past year, an increase of 66 percent, the force said.

Critics also say the British authorities have struggled to penalize excessive use of force by officers. According to Inquest, an advocacy group, at least 1,871 people have been killed during or following British police custody or contact since 1990.

Only one officer has been successfully prosecuted for manslaughter over the same period, and none for murder, the group said.

In 2017, lawmakers revamped Britain's police misconduct investigation agency, the Independent Office, in an effort to bolster public trust in the body. But it, too, has faced unwanted scandal: Its first chief resigned last year and was later charged with sexually assaulting a minor in the 1980s.

Artworks of Schiele That Nazis Looted Are Finally Returned

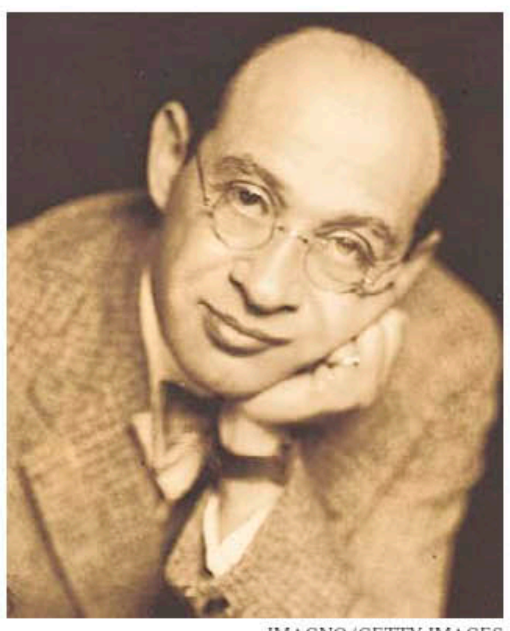
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set off an international incident in 1998, after a Schiele that Grünbaum had owned was lent by an Austrian museum to the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Robert M. Morgenthau, who was then the Manhattan district attorney, issued a subpoena to try, unsuccessfully, to prevent its return, and that of another disputed Schiele, to Austria.

The Manhattan district attorney's office became involved in the case again in December, after a 2018 New York civil court ruling that said Mr. Grünbaum had never sold or surrendered any of his works before his death, making his heirs their true owners. Prosecutors found evidence that the seven works had passed through the hands of a Manhattan dealer, which they said gave them jurisdiction. That made things different this time: Approached by prosecutors, several prominent museums and collectors agreed to hand the Schieles over to the heirs after being told they possessed stolen property.

"We are returning these beautiful works, these drawings, to their rightful owners, to the family," Mr. Bragg said as the works were handed back. "This incredible art collection was stolen by the Nazi regime."

At the handover ceremony, two tables bearing seals that said "District Attorney — New York County" were covered with blue cloths that were pulled back to reveal five of the returned Schieles. (Two others were deemed too fragile to display, since they were unframed.) In a briefing room often used to announce murder charges and other more typical law-and-order cases, reporters, photographers and the Grünbaum heirs crowded around the tables to examine Schiele's paint strokes and fine sketching.



IMAGNO/GETTY IMAGES

Fritz Grünbaum, a Viennese cabaret artist, owned several Schieles before being killed.

Monitors showed photos of Mr. Grünbaum, and there were four members of the heirs' family present. That the return was taking place in the midst of the Jewish High Holy Days was not lost on the family. David Fraenkel, one of the heirs, said he found "the timing exquisite."

Mr. Reif, 64, a judge on the United States Court of International Trade, thanked investigators in a somber but hopeful speech, saying that "your recovery reminds us once again that history's largest mass murder has long concealed history's greatest mass robbery."

The seven returned works had been in the hands of three museums — the Museum of Modern Art and the Morgan Library & Museum, both in New York, and the Santa Barbara Museum of Art in California — and two collectors, Ronald S. Lauder, the president of the World Jewish Congress and a longtime advocate of Holocaust restitution, and the estate of Serge Sabarsky, a well-known art collector. (Separately, an eighth work held by the Sabarsky estate was previously returned to the heirs.)

Mr. Grünbaum, a celebrated Jewish cabaret performer and art patron known for his barbs against Nazism, was arrested in 1938 and sent to the Dachau death camp in Germany.

While imprisoned, prosecutors said, he was forced to execute a power of attorney in favor of his wife, Elisabeth, who was later compelled to hand over his art collection — which included 81 Schieles — to Nazi officials. The prosecutors said that the collection was inventoried and then impounded in a Nazi-controlled warehouse in 1938, and that the works by Schiele, who had been declared a degenerate artist, were auctioned or sold abroad to finance the Nazi Party.

Mr. Grünbaum was killed in 1941 and his wife, who was also sent to a death camp, in 1942.

In the 1950s, many Schieles and other works from his collection surfaced on the art market in the possession of a Swiss dealer, Eberhard Kornfeld. They were later sold to a dealer, Otto Kallir, who had a gallery in New York, before being sold on to a variety of buyers and widely dispersed.

In the 2018 case the heirs went to a court in New York State and won back two Schieles — "Woman in a Black Pinafore" (1911) and "Woman Hiding Her Face" (1912) — from a collector, Richard Nagy, who had planned to sell them. The ruling found that Mr. Grünbaum had owned the works before the war, and could not have voluntarily signed away the title to them while at Dachau, with Judge Charles V. Ramos writing that "a signature at gunpoint cannot lead to a valid conveyance" of someone's property.

Bolstered by that ruling, the heirs approached the Manhattan district attorney's office in December and asked it to investigate whether Schieles once owned by Mr. Grünbaum that were in New York or had passed through the hands of Mr. Kallir could constitute stolen property under New York law, Mr. Reif and investigators said.

Matthew Bogdanos, the assistant district attorney who directs the city's Antiquities Trafficking Unit, said that he was persuaded to investigate the case as a criminal matter, and that doing so turned up new evidence tracking the paintings through New York.

"Today's celebration is affirmation that justice has no expiration date," Mr. Bogdanos said in an interview.

The museums and collectors that handed over the Schieles all signed agreements with the district attorney stating that "pursuant to a criminal investigation" into "Nazi looted art," they gave up all claims to the works.

Mr. Lauder declined to be interviewed but in a statement said, "I am pleased and honored to be able to help Fritz Grünbaum's heirs continue their laudable efforts to recover his legacy."

The Santa Barbara Museum of Art said in a statement that based on the new information, its director and board "made the determination that the drawing should be returned." The Museum of Modern Art and the Morgan declined to comment.

At least six of the returned Schieles are to be put up for auction at Christie's in New York this year. Marc Porter, Christie's head of restitution, said the sales would involve a commemoration of Mr. Grünbaum's life. The proceeds, Mr. Reif said, would fund the Grünbaum Fischer Foundation to establish a scholarship program in Fritz Grünbaum's name for young musicians.

The seven artworks returned on Wednesday had also been the subject of civil suits which have now been dismissed, according to Raymond Dowd, the lawyer for the heirs. But referring to other works owned by Mr. Grünbaum that may have passed through the city, Mr. Dowd said, "We have asked the D.A. to investigate all artworks sold through New York and we believe that many more will emerge."

The returned works have been valued at between $780,000 and $2.75 million apiece. Two were surrendered by the Museum of Modern Art: "Prostitute" (1912), a watercolor and pencil on paper, and "Girl Putting on Shoe" (1910), a watercolor and charcoal on paper. "Portrait of the Artist's Wife, Edith" (1915), a pencil on paper, was surrendered by the Santa Barbara museum, and "Self-Portrait" (1910), black chalk and watercolor on brown paper, by the Morgan.

Mr. Lauder surrendered "I Love Antithesis" (1912), a watercolor and pencil on paper. The Sabarsky estate gave back "Portrait of a Boy (Herbert Reiner)" (1910), a gouache, watercolor and pencil on paper, and "Seated Woman" (1911), a gouache, watercolor and pencil on paper valued at $1,250,000.

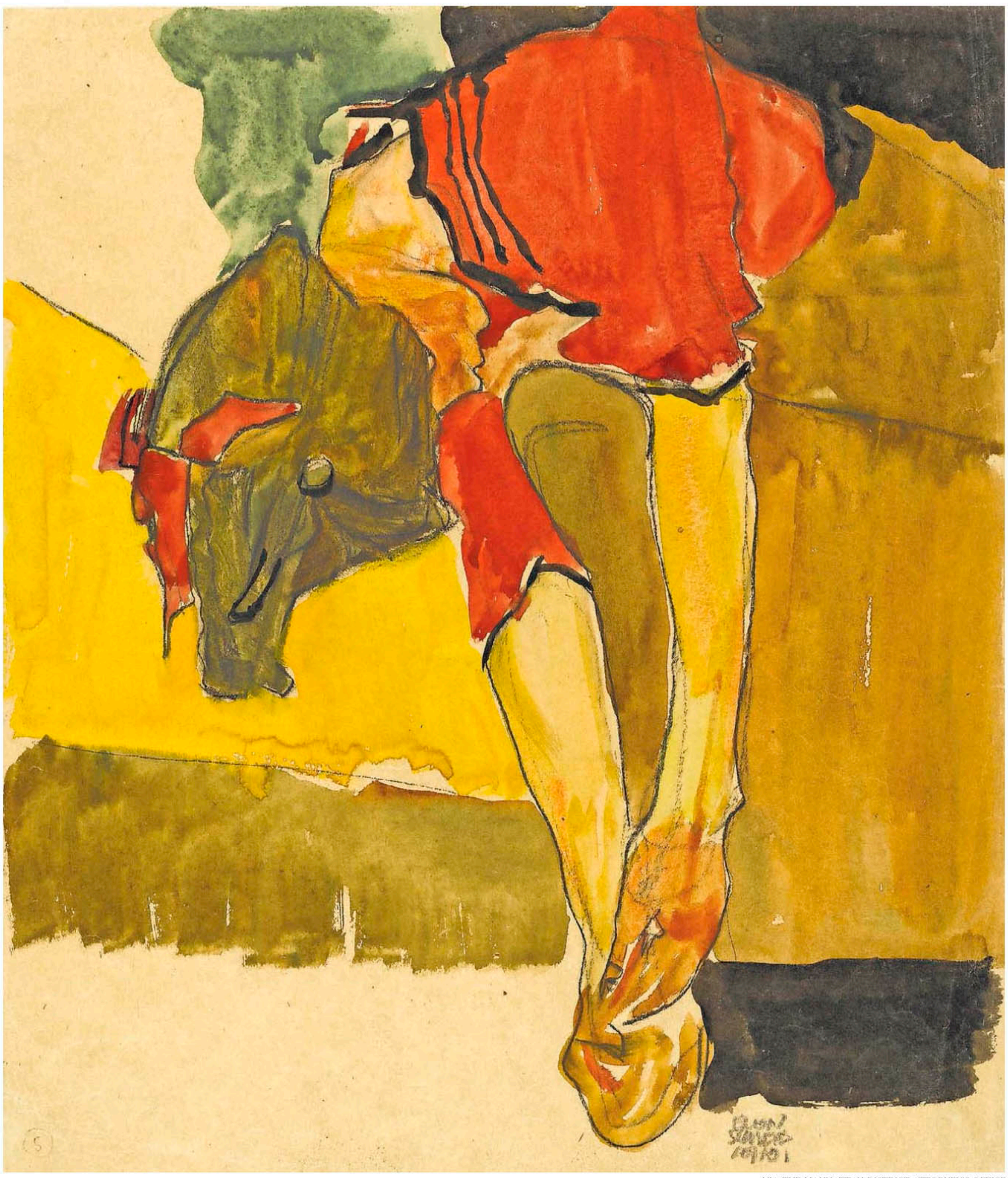
Manhattan prosecutors have said that they are conducting an investigation into at least a dozen Schiele works they say were looted by the Nazis and trafficked at some point through New York.

Last week, investigators seized three other Schieles from three out-of-state museums, saying those works had also been stolen and lawfully belonged to Mr. Grünbaum's heirs.

Those three institutions — the Art Institute of Chicago, the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh and the Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin College in Ohio — face lawsuits from the heirs in federal court, and have indicated that they believe they have good title to their works.

Mr. Reif said that getting back the art filled him with gratitude.

"Each one is exquisite to me," he said. "I love these works because recovering them allows me to honor the memory of this man."



VIA THE MANHATTAN DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Schiele's "Girl Putting on Shoe," a watercolor and charcoal on paper from 1910, was surrendered by the Museum of Modern Art.



MANHATTAN DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Works by the Austrian expressionist, from left: "Russian War Prisoner," formerly held by the Art Institute of Chicago; "Portrait of a Man," formerly held by the Carnegie Museum of Art; and "Girl With Black Hair," formerly held by the Allen Memorial Art Museum.

Offered Reform, Spain Women's Soccer Team Agrees to Return to Competition

By RACHEL CHAUNDLER

ZARAGOZA, Spain — Nearly a month after Spain's World Cup-winning women's national soccer team was thrown into turmoil over a forcible kiss, the players have agreed to come back and play their scheduled high-profile matches in the coming days.

The players' participation had been in doubt after many of them demanded an overhaul of Spain's soccer federation to guarantee a "safe place where women are respected."

In addition to the furor over the kiss, by Spain's top soccer official, Luis Rubiales, after the team's World Cup victory in Australia on Aug. 20, the players had voiced longstanding complaints of sexism and of unequal treatment compared with their male counterparts.

Mr. Rubiales has since stepped down over the episode, and the team's coach, Jorge Vilda, was fired amid complaints of outdated training methods and controlling behavior.

But the players continue to push for more changes within the federation as well as demands like equal pay and better-quality sports facilities.

On Wednesday morning, after a meeting of players, government officials and soccer federation bosses that went on through the night, the president of the state-run National Sports Council said that 21 of the 23 players on the roster for the European Nations League matches against Sweden and Switzerland over the coming week had agreed to play.

The Nations League matches are particularly important because they determine which three European countries can compete in the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris.

"Twenty-one players are going to Sweden," said the National Sports Council president, Víctor Francos, adding that "there are two players who don't feel they have the spirit or the strength" to take the field.

Under Spanish law, players can face fines of up to 30,000 euros, about $32,100, or suspensions of up to five years for refusing to take the field for the national team without a valid reason.

But on Wednesday morning, Mr. Francos offered assurances at a news conference that "neither the federation nor the sports council" would initiate "a sanctioning process" against players who decided not to represent their country.

Amanda Gutiérrez, the president of the women's soccer union, FUTPRO, applauded the government's commitment to addressing discrimination in the sport and the "reconciliation of positions" between the players and the federation.

Speaking on behalf of the players, who must now focus on preparing for their match against Sweden on Friday, Ms. Gutiérrez said a commission would be set up involving the government, the federation and the players to monitor the agreement reached on Wednesday.

"It is the beginning of a long road," she said, with consequences for "future generations."

The two players who did not agree to play in the matches — Mapi León, a defender, and Patri Guijarro, a midfielder — were among the 15 players involved in a rebellion last year against Mr. Vilda's behavior. A dozen of them subsequently said they wanted to rejoin the team, and three were invited back, but neither Ms. Leon nor Ms. Guijarro asked to return.

Ms. Leon said on Wednesday, "We are happy because changes are being made." But Ms. Guijarro said, "We're not mentally prepared to be here."

The emergency meeting that led to the agreement took place at the Oliva Nova Beach & Golf Hotel in Valencia, where the players had been summoned on Tuesday by the team's new coach, Montse Tomé — the first woman to be chosen for the post — to prepare for the match against Sweden.

Earlier in the week, Ms. Tomé had drawn up a roster for the match, even though the federation had not met the players' demands. The roster did not include Jennifer Hermoso, the player whom Mr. Rubiales forcibly kissed on camera after the team captured the World Cup title. She filed a sexual-assault complaint against him this month, which cleared the way for prosecutors to open a case against him over the kiss.

At the news conference, Rafa del Amo, the president of women's soccer within the national federation, said of Ms. Hermoso, "I think that she has to be protected from pressure."

Many players had been upset over being included on the roster before their demands were met.

When Misa Rodríguez, a goalkeeper, turned up for duty on Tuesday morning, reporters asked her whether she was happy with the roster.

"No," she replied.

Most of her teammates declined to give remarks upon arriving at the venue.

At the news conference on Wednesday morning, Mr. Francos offered assurances that the federation would immediately take steps to appease its players.

"I've debated many things, many decisions that you will see shortly," Mr. del Amo said.

Both he and Mr. Francos said the team's new coach, Ms. Tomé, would remain in her role, a situation that had been in doubt because of lack of dialogue with players before the roster announcement and over support that she expressed for Mr. Rubiales on Aug. 25, when he said that he would not resign and railed against "false feminism."

Miquel Iceta, the minister for culture and sports, welcomed the agreement reached between the players and the soccer federation.

"We want a principle of trust between the players and the Royal Spanish Football Federation to be re-established," he said at a mid-morning news conference.

To that end, the government's National Sports Council said that legislation would be drafted including gender-equality policies, pay equity and quality sports facilities for women's soccer.

Canada's Allegations Further Divide Its Indian Diaspora

A Lengthy History Of Tense Scuffles

By VJOSA ISAI and IAN AUSTEN

TORONTO — The stunning allegation that India was behind the killing of a Sikh separatist leader in British Columbia has revived long-simmering tensions within Canada's Indian diaspora, pitting staunch Hindu nationalists against supporters of the creation of an independent Sikh state called Khalistan.

Last October, in the city of Mississauga in Ontario, the police broke up a fight in which one man was slightly injured after a crowd, carrying Indian and Khalistan flags, became unruly during a Diwali celebration. In March, a Punjabi radio journalist covering a protest of an Indian high commissioner's visit to Surrey, British Columbia, was attacked by demonstrators.

These episodes underscore the challenges that Canada — home to the world's largest Sikh population outside India — faces following Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's claim on Monday that India was responsible for the killing of the Sikh leader, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who was fatally shot in June outside a temple in Surrey, a suburb of Vancouver.

Mr. Trudeau's allegations have set off a diplomatic skirmish, as the country seeks India's cooperation with its investigation into Mr. Nijjar's killing.

The long-running, tense and sometimes combative relationship between extremists on both sides threatens to spill over into new violence as their members are either empowered or enraged by Mr. Trudeau's allegation.

While Canada has long said that anti-India protests by Sikhs, provided they are not violent, are constitutionally protected free speech, a senior federal government official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive information, said the country recognizes that there is a need to find a way to rein in more extreme and inflammatory actions.

Sikhs make about 2.1 percent of the country's population, roughly 770,000 people, just over half of all people with Indian heritage in the country.

An episode in June prompted an objection from India's foreign minister, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar. That month, a march in Brampton, Ontario, a city west of Toronto, included a parade float presented by Sikh nationalists that mocked the assassination of Indira Gandhi, who was killed in 1984 by two of her Sikh bodyguards.

Speaking at a news conference several days later in New Delhi, Mr. Jaishankar called attention to a video on social media that showed the parade float.

"I think it's not good for the relationship, and I think it's not good for Canada," he said.

Since Mr. Nijjar's murder, tensions between the two communities have intensified. In July, protesters outside India's consulate general, in downtown Toronto, promoted the Khalistan cause with large signs that accused Indian diplomats of being behind Mr. Nijjar's murder.

In a statement on the social media site X, formerly known as Twitter, Mélanie Joly, Canada's foreign minister, called the posters "unacceptable" and said the country takes its duties "regarding the safety of diplomats very seriously."

Last October, the police intervened after a fight erupted at Diwali celebrations in Mississauga, where a crowd of several hundred was dotted with Khalistan flags on one side and Indian flags on another. Police described the fighting as isolated and did not make any arrests.

Last July, the murder of another Sikh man stoked fears of targeted killings in the Sikh community in Surrey.

Ripudaman Singh Malik, 75, was shot to death in daylight by two men in their 20s who the police later charged with first-degree murder. Mr. Malik was one of the men accused in the 1985 Air India bombing that killed 329 people aboard a flight to New Delhi from Toronto.

He was acquitted in 2005 in a lengthy trial that came after the death of many witnesses — some of whom were murdered. Other witnesses were intimidated into not testifying.

Relations between Sikhs and others can turn combative.

Mr. Malik's shooting prompted Balpreet Singh Boparai, a Toronto-based lawyer for the World Sikh Organization, to approach the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, Canada's spy agency, with his concerns about the safety of Mr. Nijjar and other Sikh activists, he said. He said he had also spoken to the local police.

"I had expressed concerns generally about Indian interference in Canada, but also of Sikh activists being targeted," said Mr. Boparai. The statement from Mr. Trudeau, he said, validated the community's fears.

"Sikhs have talked about foreign interference, specifically Indian interference here in Canada, for decades and this is a lived reality for our community," Mr. Boparai said. "But often, this was just written off as conspiracy theories."

Such stories have swirled around the Sikh community for decades, Mukhbir Singh, a director of the World Sikh Organization, told reporters during a news conference in Ottawa on Tuesday.

"The younger generation that grew up in Canada, they grew up hearing stories about the persecution, of fear, of speaking out a little too much and you might get on a list or be targeted," he said. "To see that happening right now in 2023, in Canada, it's certainly shocking."

In India, the actions of the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi seemed to escalate the matter, and the news cycle was dominated by diplomatic tensions.

The Indian foreign ministry issued a strongly worded travel advisory on Wednesday, urging Indian citizens planning to travel to Canada to "exercise utmost caution" because of what it called "growing anti-India activities and politically-condoned hate crimes and criminal violence in Canada."

India's National Investigation Agency, posted the photos and names of possible suspects on X, formerly Twitter, saying that it was intensifying a "CRACKDOWN ON KHALISTANI TERRORISTS OPERATING in India."

In the flood of misinformation dominating Indian information space in such moments of heightened nationalism, ascertaining just how many of the names included in the post actually had ties to Canada was difficult.

Speaking with reporters, Dominic LeBlanc, Canada's minister of public safety, dismissed India's travel warning.

"People can read into that what they want," he told reporters in Ottawa. "Canada is a safe country. What we're doing is ensuring there's an appropriate criminal investigation into these circumstances."

He said that releasing any further information at this point could jeopardize the work of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Karan Singh contributed reporting.



DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS



GEOFF ROBINS/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

A cyclist near the temple in Surrey, British Columbia, where Hardeep Singh Nijjar was killed in June. At left, police arrest a Sikh protester in front of the Indian Consulate in Toronto in July.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Canada's Claims About a Killing Catch the U.S. Between Allies

By PETER BAKER

WASHINGTON — A day after promising to "defend democracy," President Biden brought up India and Saudi Arabia on Wednesday during a round of meetings at the United Nations — not to raise concerns about repression by either, but to hail them for helping establish a new economic corridor. "I think it's a big deal," he said.

Perhaps no two countries reflect the difficult and delicate trade-offs in Mr. Biden's foreign policy at the moment more than India and Saudi Arabia. He has made it a priority to court both nations as part of his effort to counter Russia and China, even as India has been backsliding in its democracy and Saudi Arabia never had one to begin with.

The news of the week illustrated just how acute that tension really is. India's government was accused of orchestrating the assassination of a political opponent on Canadian soil, leaving Mr. Biden caught between one of America's oldest friends and the newer friend he has been cultivating. And word emerged that Mr. Biden's envoys are negotiating a new defense treaty with Saudi Arabia, putting aside its own history of extraterritorial killing.

While Mr. Biden did not address either subject, the White House responded to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's accusations against India on Wednesday with studied judiciousness. John F. Kirby, a spokesman for Mr. Biden's National Security Council, pronounced the administration "deeply concerned" about the allegations and said that "the facts should take the investigators where they may and that the perpetrators of this attack need to be brought to justice."

But he emphasized American ties with India. "I can just tell you that our relationship with India remains vitally important not only for the South Asian region but of course for the Indo-Pacific," Mr. Kirby told reporters. Then, shortly after the briefing, the council emailed a statement from another spokesperson, Adrienne Watson, saying: "Targeting dissidents in other countries is absolutely unacceptable and we will keep taking steps to push back on this practice."

The killing in Canada spawned second-guessing about Mr. Biden's outreach to India at a time when he has increasingly prioritized bolstering partnerships over full-throated advocacy for democracy. He just visited India this month and on the way back stopped in Hanoi to cement a strategic relationship with Vietnam, a one-party Communist-run state, with barely a mention of repression there. His administration just signed a new security and economic agreement with Bahrain, a tightly controlled monarchy.

"They talk a lot about the importance of democracy," Sarah Margon, who was Mr. Biden's original nominee for assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor, said in an interview on Wednesday. "There are important initiatives that have developed to support democracy. But when push comes to shove, what we're seeing is that supporting and sustaining democracy does not reach the same level of other geopolitical concerns."

Mr. Biden, who has called the "battle between democracy and autocracy" the defining struggle of this era, has lately been moving away from that framing. While he used some version of that wording 11 times last year, he has only done so four times this year and not in the past two months, according to a search of Factba.se, a service that records presidential statements.

During his annual address to the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday, Mr. Biden did not use the democracy-versus-autocracy phrase, as he had in his speech at the world forum a year ago. And rather than casting the war in Ukraine as a battle for democracy, he talked about it in terms of sovereignty, territorial integrity and freedom from foreign domination.

His main reference to democracy in the speech on Tuesday came in condemning a series of recent coups in Africa. "We will defend democracy — our best tool to meet the challenges we face around the world," he said. "And we're working to show how democracy can deliver in ways that matter to people's lives."

The furor in Canada over the shooting of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Sikh community leader, in British Columbia in June feels like an eerie echo of the Saudi-orchestrated assassination of Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi dissident and journalist living in the United States, at the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul in 2018. In both cases, a government considered an American friend was accused of carrying out the killing of a critic on the soil of a NATO ally.

Mr. Trudeau blamed "agents of the government of India" for the shooting and expelled an Indian diplomat described as the head of New Delhi's intelligence agency in Canada. India has denied Mr. Trudeau's accusation and expelled a Canadian diplomat in response.

In the past, the United States has joined allies in retaliating against adversaries plotting to murder opponents sheltered in their countries. President Donald J. Trump expelled 60 Russian diplomats in 2018 after agents from Moscow used a nerve agent to try to kill Sergei V. Skripal, a dissident former Russian intelligence officer, on British soil (although Mr. Trump later expressed anger to aides over being talked into doing so).

Unlike Saudi Arabia or Russia, India has long been a thriving democracy with diverse and robust points of view debated in Parliament and the media. But the space for freedom has shrunk in recent years under Mr. Modi, a Hindu nationalist who was once barred from entering the United States because of the massacre of Muslims in the province where he was then chief minister.

The negotiation of a possible mutual defense treaty with Saudi Arabia resembling U.S. military pacts with Japan and South Korea comes amid a broader effort to transform America's relationship with the kingdom. Mr. Biden hopes to broker a deal to normalize relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman wants a stronger security commitment from Washington as part of any arrangement.

Prince Mohammed suggested on Wednesday that progress was being made toward normalization. "Every day we get closer," he told Fox News. The topic was also a big part of a meeting held by Mr. Biden with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, who likewise offered an optimistic forecast for "a historic peace between Israel and Saudi Arabia," as he termed it. "This is something within our reach," the Israeli leader told reporters.

The notion of drawing closer to Riyadh belied Mr. Biden's 2020 campaign promise to make Saudi Arabia a "pariah" because of the murder of Mr. Khashoggi, who was killed and dismembered, according to the C.I.A., on the orders of Prince Mohammed, often called M.B.S. Mr. Biden shared a friendly handshake in a brief conversation with Prince Mohammed on the sideline of the recent Group of 20 meeting in New Delhi, abandoning the more distant fist-bump the president opted for while visiting Jeddah a year earlier.

As with India, Vietnam and other countries Mr. Biden has sought to bolster relations with, the subtext of the move to strengthen ties with Saudi Arabia is China and Russia. The Biden administration wants not only to bring an end to generations of conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors but also to anchor the oil-producing kingdom more firmly in America's orbit.

Absent from the administration's deliberations are some key voices representing democratic reform. Thirty-two months after taking office, Mr. Biden still has no Senate-confirmed assistant secretary of state overseeing democracy promotion since Ms. Margon's confirmation was blocked by Republicans.

And the president has never named a permanent replacement for Shanthi Kalathil, his White House coordinator for democracy and human rights, who stepped down in early 2022, leaving vacant a position with equal rank to influential advisers on the Middle East and the Indo-Pacific who have been orchestrating the outreach to countries like Saudi Arabia and India.

Tom Malinowski, a Democratic former representative from New Jersey, said there was "admirable realism and clarity" in the democracy-versus-autocracy vision that Mr. Biden has previously articulated, one that seemed undercut by making a permanent security agreement with a country where all power is vested in an unaccountable royal family.

"The problem with giving a legally binding defense commitment to Saudi Arabia — something we're not even ready to do for Ukraine — is not just that it would erode the moral authority of our position," he said. "It's that M.B.S. is so aggressively on the side of the other authoritarian powers — helping Russia economically while hurting American consumers, crushing any democratic openings in the Arab world, even trying to corrupt American politics."

Mr. Biden and his advisers insist that he remains committed to democracy and human rights even in countries that he wants to work with. "I've raised it with every person I met with," he told reporters while in Hanoi.



POOL PHOTO BY EVAN VUCCI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India welcoming President Biden to the G20 summit, held in New Delhi early this month, where Mr. Biden worked to cultivate a relationship with Mr. Modi.

National

The New York Times

A Collaboration to Make Renewable-Energy Projects Work for Workers

Maine Law Is Meant To Foster Union Jobs

By JIM TANKERSLEY

AUGUSTA, Maine — President Biden's labor and environmental goals are colliding in the auto industry, where concerns over the electric vehicle transition underpin an autoworkers strike. But in states like Maine, unions and environmental groups have teamed up in an attempt to make a central promise of the president's green agenda come true for workers.

Mr. Biden has a favorite phrase when talking about the expansive climate bill he signed into law last year: "When I think climate — not a joke — I think jobs," he said last month at the White House. "When I say climate means jobs, I mean good-paying union jobs."

That has not yet been the case for Mr. Biden's agenda. The White House estimates that three bills Mr. Biden signed into law — the infrastructure bill, the CHIPS Act and the Inflation Reduction Act — have led to more than $500 billion in planned investments in low-emission energy and advanced manufacturing that will eventually lead to thousands of new jobs. But much of that has flowed to conservative states like Tennessee and South Carolina — which have relatively low union membership — partly because labor is less expensive there than in heavily unionized states like Michigan.

Policymakers in Maine are trying to change that trend with a new law that seeks to make the state a more attractive destination for clean-energy investment — and to ensure those investments create new union jobs. Their efforts center on the development and deployment of offshore wind power, a sector that, like electric vehicles, is crucial to Mr. Biden's economic and emissions goals.

Gov. Janet Mills of Maine, a Democrat, recently signed a law that seeks to jump-start an offshore wind industry that has been in the works for more than a decade, while trying to raise unionization of the sector.

The law attaches its procurement spending to new labor standards for what officials hope will be thousands of new wind-energy workers, including wage minimums and requirements meant to increase the odds that jobs will go to union members.

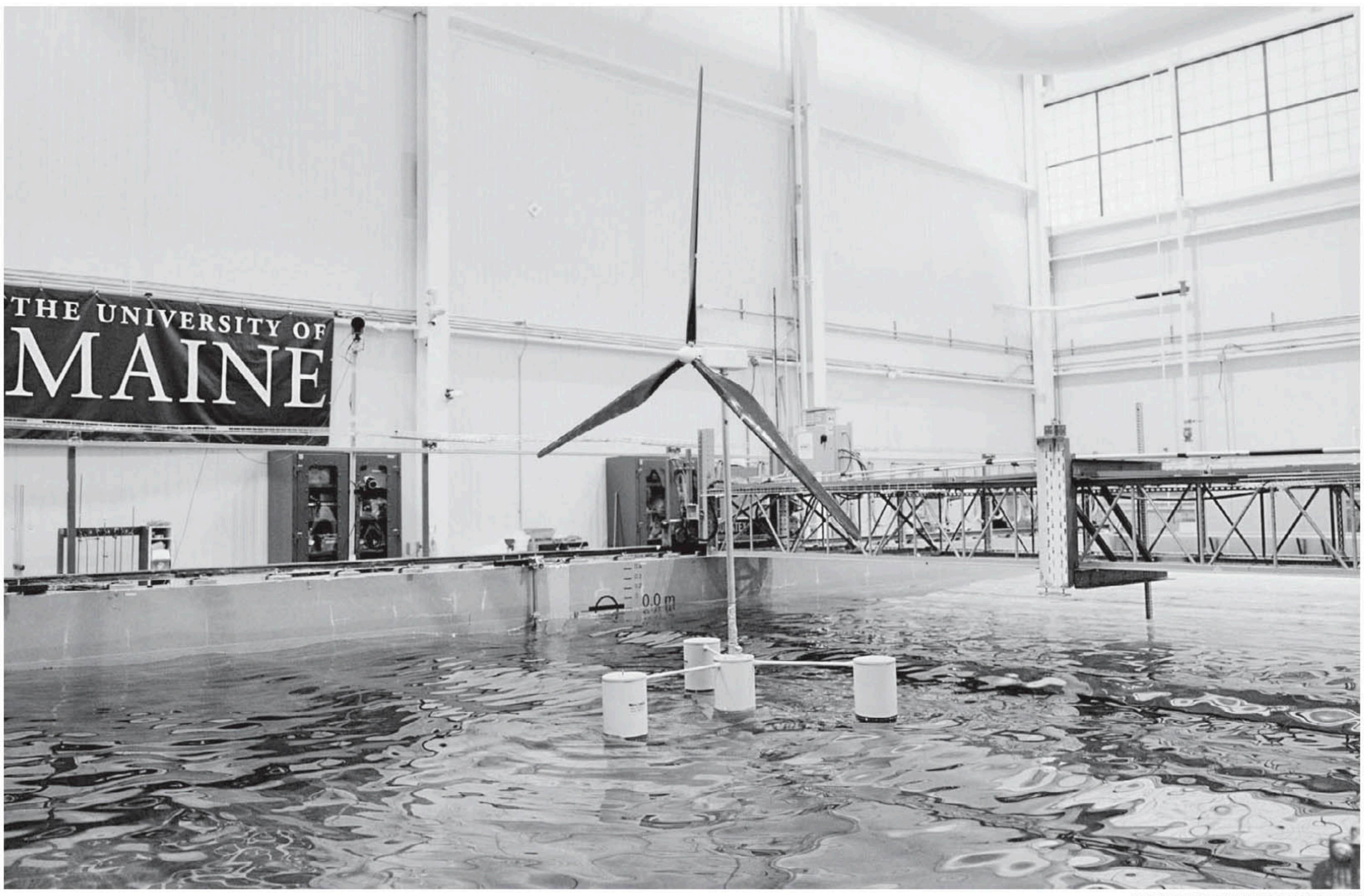
Some of the spending that Mr. Biden has approved carries similar requirements aimed at helping unions and lifting wages. But much of it does not, including vast tax credits for clean energy created by the Inflation Reduction Act.

Union leaders are hoping Maine's law — and those like it in other liberal states — help fulfill Mr. Biden's "union jobs" promise for his climate spending.

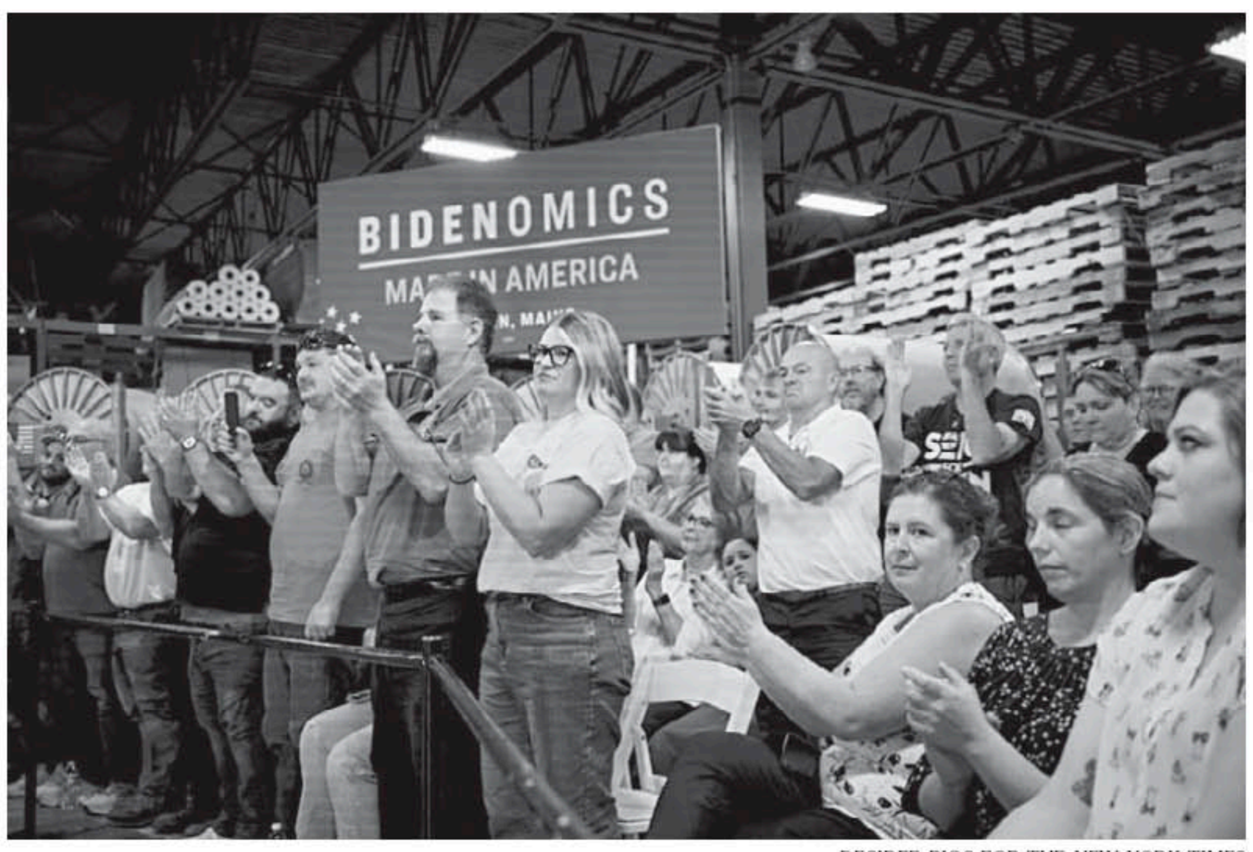
"Maine paints a picture of what can be done anywhere," said Matt Schlobohm, the executive director of the Maine A.F.L.-C.I.O. labor union.

Maine has received federal funding from several of Mr. Biden's economic laws but no new private investment in electric vehicles or other low-emission energy manufacturing projects, according to Biden administration statistics. To help attract that money, Ms. Mills pushed bills this year to speed the manufacturing of offshore turbines at a so-called wind port and guarantee the purchase of the electricity that those turbines will eventually generate.

A coalition of union leaders and environmental groups pushed the governor to go further and include wage floors, training standards and other measures meant to help workers and unions in offshore wind projects.



MASON TRINCA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



DESIREE RIOS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A wave pool and wind tunnel at the University of Maine in Orono. Left, the audience at a speech by President Biden shortly after the state passed a law setting standards for wages and other requirements for workers in the offshore wind industry. Not all of Mr. Biden's investment bills include such rules.

The group's leaders included Jason J. Shedlock, the president of the Maine State Building and Construction Trades Council. At one point, he told the governor's staff that if she did not agree to labor-friendly provisions in the bill, he would lead a coordinated union effort urging the Biden administration to deny the state new funding for infrastructure, clean energy and other projects.

Ms. Mills vetoed an early version of the wind bill over its labor provisions — specifically, a requirement that construction and manufacturing projects in the state be governed by a form of collective bargaining known as project labor agreements.

But Mr. Shedlock and his allies, including top environmental groups across the state, rewrote the bill and cut a deal with Ms. Mills in the dying days of the state's legislative session.

"We knew that Maine had an opportunity to be a national leader in this industry," Mr. Shedlock said recently. "We also knew that if we didn't insist on strong labor standards, that industry would be sold to the lowest bidder."

White House officials insist that Mr. Biden's agenda will lead to the significant creation of union manufacturing jobs, citing examples like a Ford Motor announcement that it will add 6,200 union jobs across the Midwest as part of its electric vehicle strategy.

Alex Jacquez, Mr. Biden's special assistant for economic development and industrial strategy, said in an interview that the administration was committed to "ensuring that the federal funding that we put out is incentivizing applicants and recipients who prioritize those strong labor standards and prioritize good-paying union jobs."

But not all incentives come with those strings, particularly the Inflation Reduction Act. The nonprofit group Good Jobs First estimates that five newly announced battery plants that pay relatively low wages will collectively reap millions of dollars in subsidies from that law.

If that trend calcifies, union leaders worry they will spend years or decades fighting to organize workers in a new industry — which would be more difficult than creating a heavily unionized one from scratch.

"There's nothing about a clean energy job that makes it a good job," said Francis Eanes, executive director of the Maine Labor Climate Council. "We have to make that true upfront."

Unions and environmental groups have increasingly worked together in recent years to pass laws in states like Illinois, California and New York that pair renewable-energy goals with high-wage and other labor standards for the work.

The risk to states is that companies become spooked by strict labor laws and take their climate tax credits elsewhere — or invest less in renewables than they otherwise would. There is also a risk that strong wage and labor standards could push up the price of renewable projects, including wind, which is already facing mounting cost pressures in the United States and globally.

For labor and environmental groups, the effort has been both unifying and challenging.

"We're not talking about things like whether an offshore wind port is necessary. We're talking about what are the labor standards that we're going to use when we build that port?" said Kathleen Meil, senior director of policy and partnerships at the nonprofit Maine Conservation Voters. "That is a trickier conversation."

Environmental and labor groups carried their conversation with Ms. Mills and her staff deep into the summer. At one point, Mr. Shedlock delivered a proposal to the governor's team and refused to leave until it had shared the proposal with her and responded to him. The deal they cut, signed in late July, paves the way for a manufacturing facility called a wind port to be built on the Maine coast. It commits the state to a goal of procuring 3 gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2040.

Dan Burgess, who directs Ms. Mills's energy office, said the commitment "helps give that signal and that certainty to the market that we're moving forward with this."

The spending is attached to new wage minimums and other labor standards for the workers who build, assemble and install wind turbines. There are training mandates for those workers, and a requirement that if nonunion contractors win state construction bids, they have to fill any unexpected job openings with union labor.

Mr. Biden celebrated it on a trip to Maine shortly after it was passed.

"It is a big, big deal," he said. The bill, he added, "will create good-paying union jobs."

Smoke From Wildfires Reverses Progress Made on Cleaning Air

By DELGER ERDENESANAA and NOAH WEILAND

On the heels of an exceptionally fiery and smoky summer, two new reports released Wednesday confirmed what many Americans have been already seeing and breathing.

Smoke from increasingly frequent and increasingly large fires has started to undo decades of hard-won gains in air quality, and the problem is expected to only get worse, not just in the United States but also around the world.

More than two billion people were exposed to at least a day of fire-related air pollution each year between 2010 and 2019, a report from researchers in Australia found. And in the United States, wildfires have undone about 25 percent of past progress in cleaning up air pollution in states from coast to coast.

"People have known that it's becoming a bigger issue in the Western states," said Marissa Childs, a fellow at Harvard University's Center for the Environment and a co-author of the study that focused on the United States. "But I was really shocked when we were running some of these estimates and seeing that states all the way to the East Coast were being influenced."

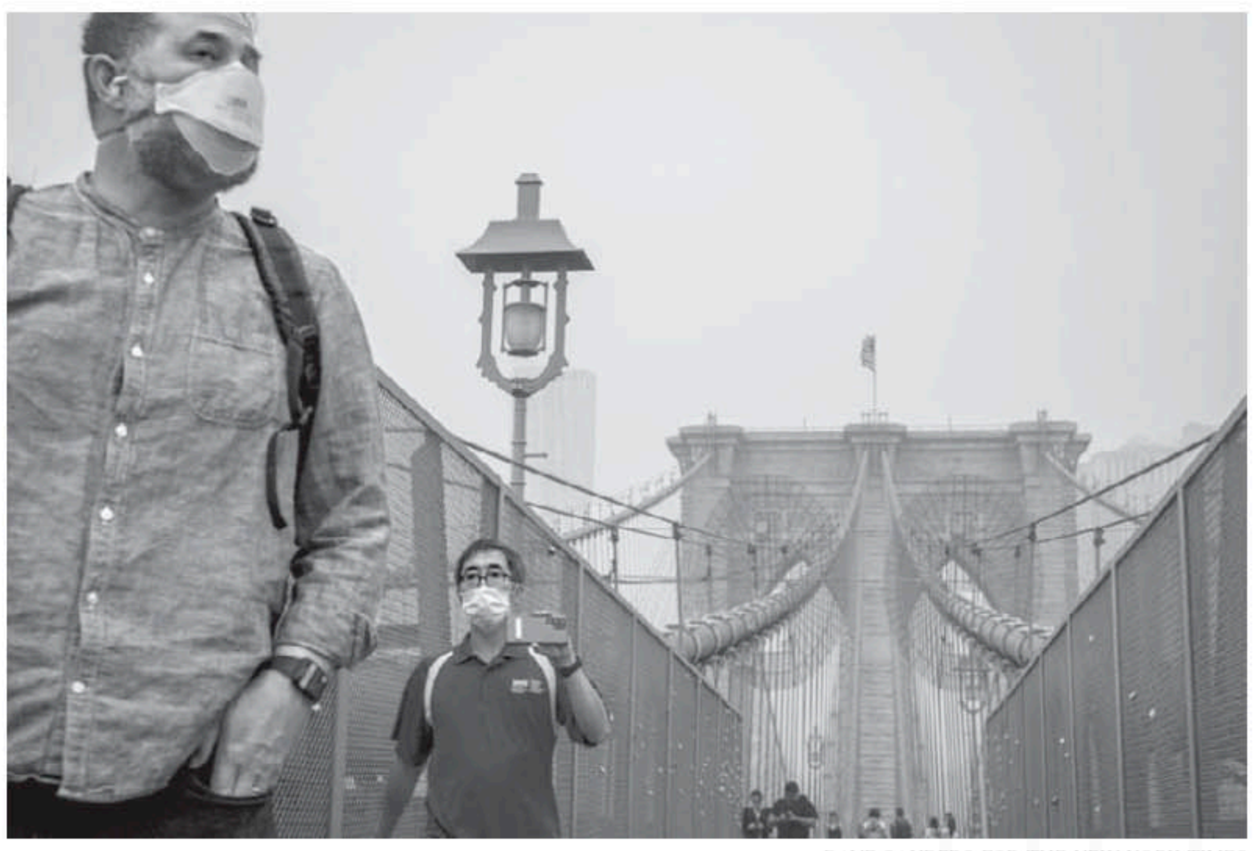
While her paper doesn't include data from 2023, Dr. Childs said the wildfires in Canada and subsequent smoke over large swaths of the northern United States this year had shown "more than ever" that everyone is going to be affected by the growing problem of wildfires, no matter where they live.

Climate change is one of the driving forces behind worsening fires worldwide. As the atmosphere warms, many forests and other natural ecosystems are becoming drier and more prone to catching on fire. "It's just so clear that, sometime in the last five to 10 years, something's changed," said Marshall Burke, a professor of environmental policy at Stanford University and a co-author of the report that focused on the United States. "You don't have to cook the books."

Together, the two studies show how wildfires are a growing health threat. Wildfire smoke can contain a variety of pollutants, including fine particulate matter, or PM 2.5, a type of air pollution made up of very small particles that can invade the lungs and bloodstream.

Thanks to the Clean Air Act, air pollution in the United States has generally improved since the 1970s. But levels of PM 2.5, which are routinely tracked by the Environmental Protection Agency and had been declining, took a marked turn back up around 2016.

Since 2016, wildfire smoke has had a statistically significant effect on PM 2.5 trends in 35 out of 48 continental states, according to Dr. Burke and Dr. Childs's study. (The data set did not include Alaska or Hawaii.) The effect was most notable on the West Coast, where air quality has worsened drastically in recent years. But even in some New England states, smoke caused pollution levels to plateau after many years of decline.



DAVE SANDERS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Smoke from Canadian wildfires turned the New York City sky dark yellow in June. Wildfire smoke can contain a variety of pollutants.

Although the air is now cleaner in the United States than in many other parts of the world, air pollution remains a problem for public health. "It's pretty clear that wildfire smoke is affecting a lot more people on a lot more days than it used to," said Christopher Tessum, a professor of environmental engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign who researches air pollution but wasn't involved in either study.

Globally, pollution from fires is taking a bigger toll on residents of poorer countries.

The study that was led by scientists from Monash University in Australia found that each year between 2010 and 2019, every person worldwide had an average of almost 10 days of wildfire smoke exposure. The concentration of polluted air was significantly higher in poorer countries, the researchers found.

Smoke exposure between 2010 and 2019 was also higher than during the decade prior, and it underscores the prevalence and health risks of wildfires.

"We need to put a lot more resources to low-income countries to fight the fire smoke," said Yuming Guo, an environmental expert at Monash who co-wrote the study.

The study incorporated data from both wildfires and those planned or controlled by people, such as prescribed burns. The researchers used a number of sources to collect data on pollution, and examined ground-level ozone levels in addition to levels of PM 2.5. While ozone high in the atmosphere protects us from harmful radiation, ozone close to the ground can cause breathing problems and can aggravate respiratory illnesses like asthma, bronchitis and emphysema.

Countries with hot and dry conditions that make them vulnerable to wildfires were particularly choked by PM 2.5, including those in central Africa, Southeast Asia and South America.

"Different countries experience different fire smoke," Dr. Guo said. "So different countries should deploy different resources."

Determining what approaches to use is going to be a complicated effort anywhere.

"It can't be done the way that we've dealt with, say, industrial pollution or cars," said Colleen Reid, a professor of geography at the University of Colorado, Boulder, who studies the health impacts of wildfires, but was not involved in either of the papers released Wednesday. "There's not like a scrubber or a catalytic converter, some sort of technological thing you can put on a wildfire."

"While we work on policy solutions to try and deal with wildfires, we also can protect people's health by investing in better air quality in indoor spaces," Dr. Reid added, noting that it was important to make sure people knew how to protect themselves outside on smoky days by wearing masks or respirators. She also emphasized the importance of tackling climate change.

"In addition to all the policies to address wildfire smoke, obviously we need significant change to decrease our greenhouse gas emissions," she said, "so we can try to deal with the climate side of the equation that's increasing wildfire risk."



NASA, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Frank Rubio, who has set a record for the longest continuous spaceflight by an American, is scheduled to return to Earth on Sept. 27.

Astronaut Ready for Silence After Year in Space

By AMANDA HOLPUCH

After a year spent listening to the constant hum of the complicated machinery that keeps the International Space Station livable, the astronaut Frank Rubio is looking forward to some silence on Earth.

Mr. Rubio is scheduled to return to land next week after a 371-day mission, the longest single spaceflight for an American astronaut.

On Sept. 11, he surpassed the previous record for the longest continuous spaceflight by an American, and he will complete a full year in space on Thursday. At a news conference on Tuesday, Mr. Rubio spoke on video from the International Space Station about what he was most looking forward to when he returns home on Sept. 27: his family, fresh food and silence.

"For me, honestly, obviously, hugging my wife and kids is going to be paramount, and I'll probably focus on that for the first couple days," Mr. Rubio said as he bobbed gently in zero gravity.

He said he was also looking forward to being back in his quiet backyard and "enjoying the trees and the silence."

His return home will be even sweeter because when Mr. Rubio launched on the Russian Soyuz MS-22 spacecraft from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan last September, he expected to be back home in six months, not a year.

Those plans changed after a coolant leak in the Soyuz spacecraft was detected in December. The leak could have created potentially fatally hot temperatures for the crew on their return to Earth, so a different spacecraft was sent to the space station, forcing a delay in Mr. Rubio's return trip.

Mr. Rubio said that if he had been asked to do a yearlong mission before training began, he would have declined because of his family. But, he said, if NASA had asked him to do a such a trip deeper into his two years of training, he would have agreed because it was his job.

He acknowledged that a year in space, away from loved ones, had taken a psychological toll and said it was important to stay strong mentally because of the space station's "very unforgiving environment."

"One thing that I've tried to do, and hopefully have achieved — I certainly haven't done it perfectly — is just to kind of stay positive and stay steady throughout the mission despite the internal up and downs," Mr. Rubio said. "You try to just focus on the job and on the mission and remain steady, because ultimately every day you have to show up and do the work."

Before Mr. Rubio's mission, Mark Vande Hei, who returned to Earth in March 2022 after 355 days aboard the International Space Station, held the record for the longest continuous spaceflight by an American. Dr. Valery Polyakov, a Russian astronaut who died last year, holds the world record for consecutive days spent in space: 437.

Aboard the space station, Mr. Rubio worked on a number of science projects, including investigations into how bacteria adapt to spaceflight and how exercise affects humans during long missions.

In an earlier interview with NASA, Mr. Rubio said that one of his favorite projects was studying a tomato plant to see how air and water-based growing techniques affect plants. The research could help find ways to grow crops on a larger scale in space.

"I love working with that little plant and seeing it grow and develop," he said.

In the news conference on Tuesday, Mr. Rubio spoke about the camaraderie on board the space station. During his time there, he has had 28 crewmates, including his friend Loral O'Hara, a fellow NASA astronaut who arrived at the space station last week.

Mr. Rubio said that when people first arrive at the space station, those already aboard help teach them basic tasks, such as how to use the restroom, how to prepare food and how to sleep.

"All the little things you kind of take for granted on Earth, you kind of have to learn anew up here," Mr. Rubio said.

Before joining the space program, Mr. Rubio served in the U.S. Army and attended medical school. He flew more than 1,100 hours as a helicopter pilot, which included deployments to Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq. He was born in Los Angeles, but considers Miami his hometown.

On his first day in space, Mr. Rubio said that he felt sick as his body acclimated to life in zero gravity. Now, he is preparing for his muscles and bones to get used to standing and bearing weight again. He estimated that it would be two to six months before he felt normal.

"This being my first mission," he said, "I just don't know how my body is going to react."

U.S. Plans to Resume Program Offering Virus-Test Kits by Mail

By SHERYL GAY STOLBERG

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration, looking ahead to a possible winter surge of Covid-19, announced on Wednesday that it was reviving its program of offering Americans free coronavirus tests through the mail and would spend $600 million to buy tests from a dozen domestic manufacturers.

The website for the program, covidtests.gov, will begin accepting orders on Monday, and households will receive four tests. Dawn O'Connell, the assistant secretary for preparedness and response at the Department of Health and Human Services, said the money would fund the purchase of 200 million tests to replenish the nation's stockpile as tests are sent out.

But a byproduct of the program, Ms. O'Connell said, is that it will shore up domestic manufacturing capacity in the event of another serious coronavirus surge. And if there is a spike in demand, she said, the department has given the manufacturers permission to sell the tests directly to retailers ahead of the government.

Coronavirus hospitalizations have been on the rise in the United States, though they remain low compared with earlier stretches of the pandemic, and free tests are now harder to come by for many Americans. While private insurers had previously been required to cover up to eight at-home tests per month, that requirement ended when the Biden administration allowed the public health emergency for the coronavirus to expire in May.

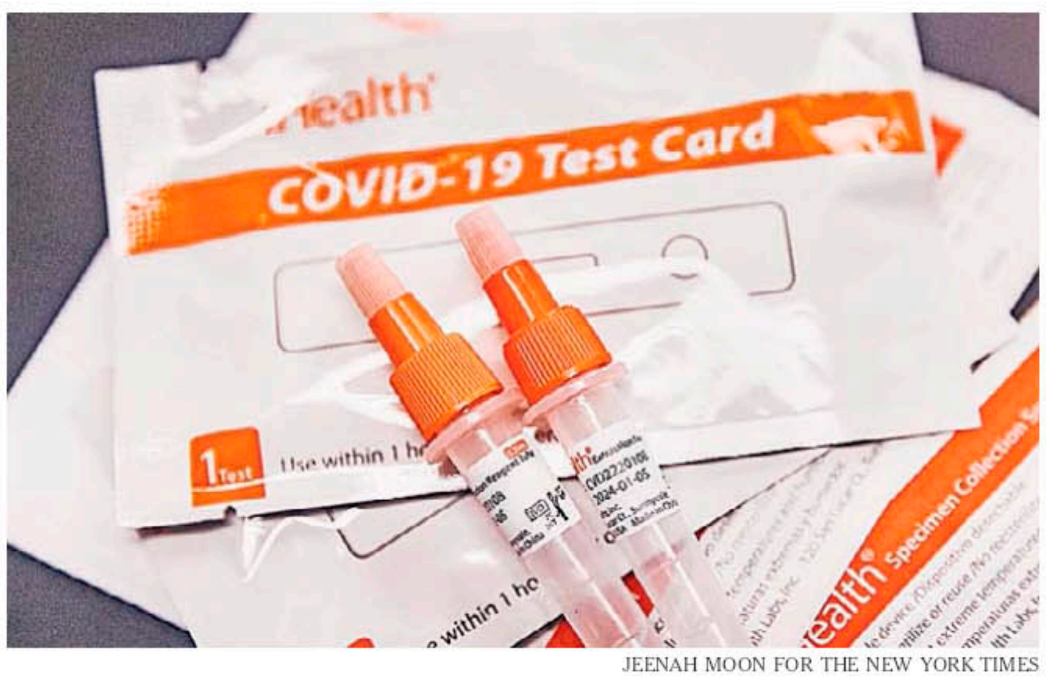
The administration first began offering free at-home coronavirus tests through the Postal Service early last year after the Omicron variant caused cases to soar. More than 600 million tests were distributed before officials halted the program late that summer, citing a lack of funding. The administration then resumed offering tests late last year before halting the program again this spring.

The announcement on Wednesday came as President Biden's health secretary, Xavier Becerra, tried to drum up interest in the newly approved coronavirus vaccines by getting his own Covid and flu shots at a CVS pharmacy in Washington. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended last week that all Americans 6 months and older receive at least one dose of the reformulated vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna.

Hoping to replenish a stockpile before the winter surge.

With the chief executives of Pfizer and Moderna standing beside him, Mr. Becerra invoked his own mother, who is about to turn 90 and, he said, has not had Covid-19.

"I feel comfortable, having gotten the shots, that I could hug and kiss my mother and not be responsible for getting her sick," he said, adding, "No one is safe until everyone is safe."



JEENAH MOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Last year, the administration distributed more than 600 million free tests in the mail before the program ran out of funding.

Target of Jan. 6 Conspiracy Theory Pleads Guilty to Single Misdemeanor

By ALAN FEUER and ZACH MONTAGUE

Ray Epps, the Trump supporter who was swept up in one of the most persistent right-wing conspiracy theories connected to the events of Jan. 6, 2021, pleaded guilty on Wednesday to a single misdemeanor charge over his role in the attack on the Capitol.

The 20-minute plea hearing, conducted by video in Federal District Court in Washington, came one day after the Justice Department charged Mr. Epps with disrupting the orderly conduct of government business by entering a restricted area on the Capitol grounds on Jan. 6.

Prosecutors said at the hearing that aside from breaching the barricades outside the Capitol, Mr. Epps placed his hands on a giant Trump sign that the mob used as a battering ram against the police.

Mr. Epps will face a maximum of one year in prison when he is sentenced in December.

Mr. Epps, a former Marine and wedding venue owner who voted twice for Donald J. Trump, became the unlikely focus of a conspiracy theory promoted on Fox News and by right-wing commentators. It held that he had been a covert government asset who helped instigate the riot as a way of discrediting Trump supporters.

The theory was largely based on the fact that he was never charged with any crimes even though he was captured on video the night before the riot encouraging people to go into the Capitol. He was also seen on Jan. 6 pointing others toward the building and then entering a restricted area of the Capitol grounds.

The subject of a baseless accusation elevated by Fox News.

The guilty plea entered by Mr. Epps showed that he was being held accountable for his crimes and undercut the narrative that he was being protected by the federal government.

During the hearing, a prosecutor told Judge James E. Boasberg, who is overseeing that case, that Mr. Epps had not worked as an agent of the government "before, during or after" Jan. 6. Citing the conspiracy theories, Edward J. Ungvarsky, a lawyer for Mr. Epps, asked Judge Boasberg to grant Mr. Epps unusual privileges before his sentencing, including maintaining the right to own a gun.

Mr. Ungvarsky argued that conspiracy-fueled threats had forced Mr. Epps to leave his job and home state, and justified letting Mr. Epps continue to travel freely and have access to firearms. Judge Boasberg flatly denied the request, citing his record of restricting gun access to others charged in connection with the riot.

In a statement issued after the hearing, Mr. Ungvarsky said Mr. Epps's guilty plea was "a step in putting his life back together."

It remains unclear why the Justice Department decided to charge Mr. Epps now, more than two and a half years after the Capitol attack. The charging document used against him, known as a criminal information, was filed two months after he brought a defamation lawsuit against Fox News, ensuring that his story would remain in the public eye for months, if not years. It also came after he decided to fight back against the conspiracy theory in the news media, granting interviews to both The New York Times and CBS's "60 Minutes."

Mr. Epps was one of only a handful of people who trespassed on the Capitol grounds on Jan. 6 but did not enter the building itself to be prosecuted. While videos from that day clearly depict him as being in the first wave of rioters to move past a police barricade outside the Capitol, footage from later in the day shows him trying to calm the crowd around him and de-escalate tensions with the police.

A hearing for oral arguments is likely to be scheduled soon in Mr. Epps's defamation suit against Fox, which is unfolding in Federal District Court in Wilmington, Del. His lawyer in that case, Michael Teter, said in a statement on Wednesday that Mr. Epps cooperated with the F.B.I. as soon as he learned that investigators were trying to identify him.

"Had Ray been charged earlier, Fox News would have called him a hero and political prisoner," Mr. Teter said. "Instead, Fox News spread falsehoods about Ray that have cost him his livelihood and safety."



ALAN FEUER/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ray Epps with his wife, Robyn. Mr. Epps, a former Marine, will face up to a year in prison when he is sentenced in December.

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Unproven Therapy At Major Hospital Got F.D.A. Warning

Whether Patients Were Notified Is at Issue

*This article is by **Ellen Gabler**, **Steve Eder** and **Allie Pitchon**.*

A visiting researcher at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center was startled when he read the warning from the Food and Drug Administration about a product that had been used in spine surgeries at the esteemed Manhattan hospital.

The fluid, derived from umbilical cord blood, was not approved for such procedures, the agency cautioned, and its Idaho manufacturer had been cited for possible contamination problems and inadequate screening of donors, making the product potentially unsafe.

Yet before that advisory, about 40 patients at the hospital had received treatment with the fluid under the direction of Dr. Roger Härtl, a senior surgeon and professor at Weill Cornell, who is also a physician for the New York Giants. The surgeries were documented in a draft study that Dr. Härtl and others, including the visiting researcher, had intended to publish, tracking the fluid's effectiveness in fusing delicate bones.

After seeing the F.D.A. announcement, the researcher, Dr.



SIPA USA, VIA AP

Dr. Roger Härtl, a senior surgeon, used the treatment before the F.D.A. warning, as did physicians at other hospitals.

Pravesh Gadjradj, approached Dr. Härtl and told him the fluid "is not yet proven to be safe," according to a complaint filed with the hospital that was reviewed by The New York Times. The fluid fell under a booming area of treatment known as regenerative medicine, which is aimed at replacing or restoring damaged cells through gene and stem cell therapies.

In the complaint, Dr. Gadjradj said Dr. Härtl requested that he "delete" the research file on the project and "never bring up the topic again." The researcher said he was concerned that Dr. Härtl had not gone on to inform the patients, according to the complaint, and instead "covered it up."

The conversation cited in the complaint was in the spring of last year, Dr. Gadjradj said in an interview. In January, after months of worrying about the patients — and believing that they still had not been notified — Dr. Gadjradj lodged the complaint against his boss.

Still, he said, nothing came of sounding the alarm about his patient concerns. "Maybe all of these patients don't have any adverse effects, but maybe they do," he said. "We don't know. That's a terrible thing." Because of privacy protections, Dr. Gadjradj said, he would not disclose the names of the patients or contact them himself.

F.D.A. warning letters do not require that patients be notified about a product's potential problems, posing an ethical dilemma for clinicians, according to medical ethics experts.

Even in the absence of a formal requirement, they said, there is often a moral obligation to inform patients, especially regarding new or untested treatments, but other considerations can get in the way.

"The safer thing, the more ethical thing, would be to tell everybody and give them whatever information you've got about what's known about the risks," said Hank Greely, a law professor at Stanford and director of its Center for Law and the Biosciences. But, he said, doctors and hospitals "are going to be reluctant to do that because they don't want to look bad, don't want to attract lawsuits and don't want to make patients unhappy with them."

Dozens of other medical centers, including prestigious institutions like Duke University Health System and the George Washington University Hospital, also listed the fluid, known as BioBurst, on their hospital pricing records, according to data collected by the company Visible Charges. Umbilical cord blood products have been approved by the F.D.A. to treat disorders that affect blood production.

A spokeswoman for NewYork-Presbyterian would not comment on Dr. Gadjradj's complaint. She said that the hospital had stopped using BioBurst before the F.D.A. issued its warning in February 2022, but she would not say whether patients had been told about receiving the fluid or, later, about its potential problems.

Dr. Härtl, who is the founder and director of the Weill Cornell Medicine Center for Comprehensive Spine Care, declined to be interviewed when reached by telephone. He later said in emails that he had used the fluid between 2019 and 2021 "as a bone grafting alternative" in minimally invasive spine surgeries. He did not directly address questions about what patients knew, but wrote that he "did not receive any patient complaints or see any unexpected adverse events, such as infections or revision surgeries, directly associated with the use of BioBurst Fluid."

"My goal has always been to reduce the pain and suffering of patients by advancing the effectiveness of spine surgery" he said.

In the emails, Dr. Härtl also disputed "any implication that we used or studied" BioBurst in an "inappropriate manner," and said that "all relevant data" remained on file and "any suggestion otherwise is not true." A draft of the unpublished study, reviewed by The Times, said it had been approved by Weill Cornell's institutional review board and had been "granted a waiver of consent."

The manufacturer, Burst Biologics, a small biotechnology company, had shipped the fluid to hospitals and clinics across the country, saying it could potentially stimulate bone regeneration. The draft study said the use of the product "showed promising results" when compared with existing literature on the subject.

The fluid belongs to a growing area of medicine that has drawn stepped-up attention from regulators. There are about 3,000 active investigational drug applications for cell and gene therapies, according to the F.D.A. Patients have clamored for the therapies to treat Parkinson's disease, autism, arthritis, back pain and other conditions, but approval has been limited to certain cancers, disorders and immune conditions and includes fewer than three dozen products.

In 2021, as Dr. Härtl and the research team were compiling their findings, F.D.A. investigators visited Burst's laboratory in an office park near the Boise airport. An inspection found numerous problems, including significant breaches in sterile manufacturing and monitoring processes, as well as a failure to adequately screen donors for the Zika virus and other communicable pathogens, according to an inspection report.

The agency also said that BioBurst Fluid and a similar product, BioBurst Rejuv, did not have proper approval.

The F.D.A. ratcheted up scrutiny of the company and in February 2022 publicly posted the warning letter. The next month, Burst recalled vials of the two products, and its founder declared bankruptcy by year's end; the company's equipment was soon sold at auction. While recalls of the most seriously defective medical products can include a process for notifying patients, Burst's did not rise to that level.

The founder, Christopher Jones, did not respond to requests for comment, but in correspondence with the F.D.A., which The Times obtained through a public records request, he defended his products as safe and accused the agency of being overzealous in its enforcement. "My business has been warned by F.D.A. of alleged safety concerns with its products related to a regulatory scheme that does not apply to my business," he wrote.

The F.D.A. would not comment on the company or the use of the fluid at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center. But Carly Pflaum, an agency spokeswoman, said in a written statement that as regenerative medicine companies make "unsubstantiated claims about the potential benefits" of unproven therapies, doctors and patients "may use these unapproved products with a false sense of security about their safety and efficacy" and are likely to underreport "adverse events."

Five years ago, patients became seriously ill in Arizona, California, Florida and Texas with infections after receiving injections in their knees, shoulders or spines that contained stem cells from umbilical cord blood not associated with Burst. The F.D.A. responded by pledging more inspections of the industry and warned about companies making unfounded claims.

Interviews as well as a review of government and corporate records by The Times found that Burst expanded its national footprint even as its own employees raised concerns to management and regulators as far back as 2017 about product safety, lab conditions and the skirting of regulatory requirements.

During that time, regulators did not take substantial action while the company was cultivating ties with doctors across the country, inviting some to visit Boise and meeting with others at medical conferences.

Among the doctors who learned about BioBurst Fluid at a medical conference: Dr. Härtl, according to a spokeswoman for Weill Cornell Medicine, the hospital's academic partner.

In March, when Dr. Gadjradj called NewYork-Presbyterian's compliance office to check on his complaint, he was told that the hospital had created a committee and restructured how it screened the purchase of biologics — a class of drugs made from living organisms that included BioBurst.

Although it was unclear from the call when and why the committee was created, the compliance official told Dr. Gadjradj: "BioBurst Fluid didn't get vetted in the same manner" as other products purchased after the committee was created, according to a recording of the conversation shared with The Times.

Improving Lives

After spending time in the U.S. Marine Corps, Mr. Jones, the Burst founder, became an entrepreneur and marketer. In 2010, he set up shop in Boise distributing medical implants used in spinal and orthopedic surgeries.

Within a few years, Mr. Jones had focused on the "cutting edge of biologics," serving "hospitals and surgeons" and selling products under the name Burst Biologics, according to the company's website. The company said it was committed to patient safety, employing Ph.D. scientists and medical directors to oversee the processing of products.

But in interviews with The Times, 11 former employees detailed serious problems that included subpar laboratory practices, a lack of training, inadequate safety protocols and a retaliatory work environment.

Several said they also had concerns about the regulatory status of two of the company's main products, BioBurst Fluid and BioBurst Rejuv, both derived from umbilical cord blood and used in operating rooms and medical clinics.

The company had insisted that because the fluids required only minimal processing, they belonged to a product class that was not subject to heavy regulatory oversight or licensing requirements.

But in 2017, as regenerative medicine was gaining popularity, the F.D.A. alerted companies to new guidelines and clarified the approval and licensing process, which would require more rigorous testing for efficacy and safety.

To give the companies a chance to gain their footing, the agency limited enforcement to significant safety threats. But the F.D.A. spokeswoman, Ms. Pflaum, said in the statement to The Times that the largely hands-off approach "did not excuse the violations of manufacturers or health care providers offering unapproved regenerative medicine products that have the potential to put patients at significant risk."

At least seven former Burst employees — including a research director, Trillitye Paullin, and two lab technicians, Dylan Walker and Brecken Robb — said they suspected that the fluids fell under the more stringent F.D.A. standards. And multiple times, some of them said, they told their managers that the company should acknowledge that fact and apply for a biologics license.

In an email reviewed by The Times, Dr. Walker alerted the F.D.A. in February 2018 about the employees' regulatory concerns. Soon after, investigators visited the Boise lab, but they noted no significant problems, according to a review of F.D.A. documents.

That December, the company's correspondence indicates, it received a letter from the F.D.A. saying that Burst appeared to be offering "stem cell" products to treat a variety of conditions. But it would be almost two and a half years before the agency took significant action against the company.

In his 2018 email, Dr. Walker also expressed "grave concerns" about screening protocols for the Zika virus, because the company's main supplier was an umbilical cord bank in Puerto Rico, where Zika was prevalent.

Around the same time, Burst's former head of research development, Dr. Paullin, filed a complaint with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration about Zika exposure.

When she became pregnant, she said, she told top management that she would only handle material that had been deemed Zika-free. But after returning from a short leave for National Guard duty, Dr. Paullin said, she was informed by a co-worker that some placentas she had been handling had tested positive.

She quit her job within days and filed the OSHA complaint, one of three the agency said it received about Burst in 2017 and 2018. OSHA said it resolved the complaints without penalty, and told Dr. Paullin in a letter that the agency closed her case after determining that "the hazardous conditions no longer exist." Her daughter was born healthy a few months later.

'Just Another Customer'

How an unapproved medical product with serious manufacturing concerns made its way into the inventory of a respected New York medical institution remains unanswered. Spokeswomen for both NewYork-Presbyterian and Weill Cornell Medicine would not explain how or when products are approved at the hospital, and would not comment on a recorded phone call between Dr. Gadjradj, the visiting researcher, and a compliance officer.

Hospitals tend to have a formal review process for products that will be used on patients. A committee often vets requests from doctors before the products are bought by the procurement department.

In interviews, doctors at several other hospitals said they also used Burst's products and expressed surprise that the F.D.A. had issued a warning about them.

Dr. Faheem A. Sandhu, a spine surgeon at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, said that he learned about BioBurst Fluid through a company sales representative around 2017, and that he had been led to believe the product was F.D.A.-approved. "I was just another customer," he said.

Dr. Sandhu said he had used the product on at least 50 patients, thought it worked well and hadn't detected any problems. He recalled that for some patients, insurance covered Burst treatment, which typically cost thousands of dollars. But if he had been aware of the regulatory concerns, he said, he would not have used it and he does not believe it would have gotten through the hospital's screening process. He said he would have notified patients had the F.D.A. or the company recommended doing so.

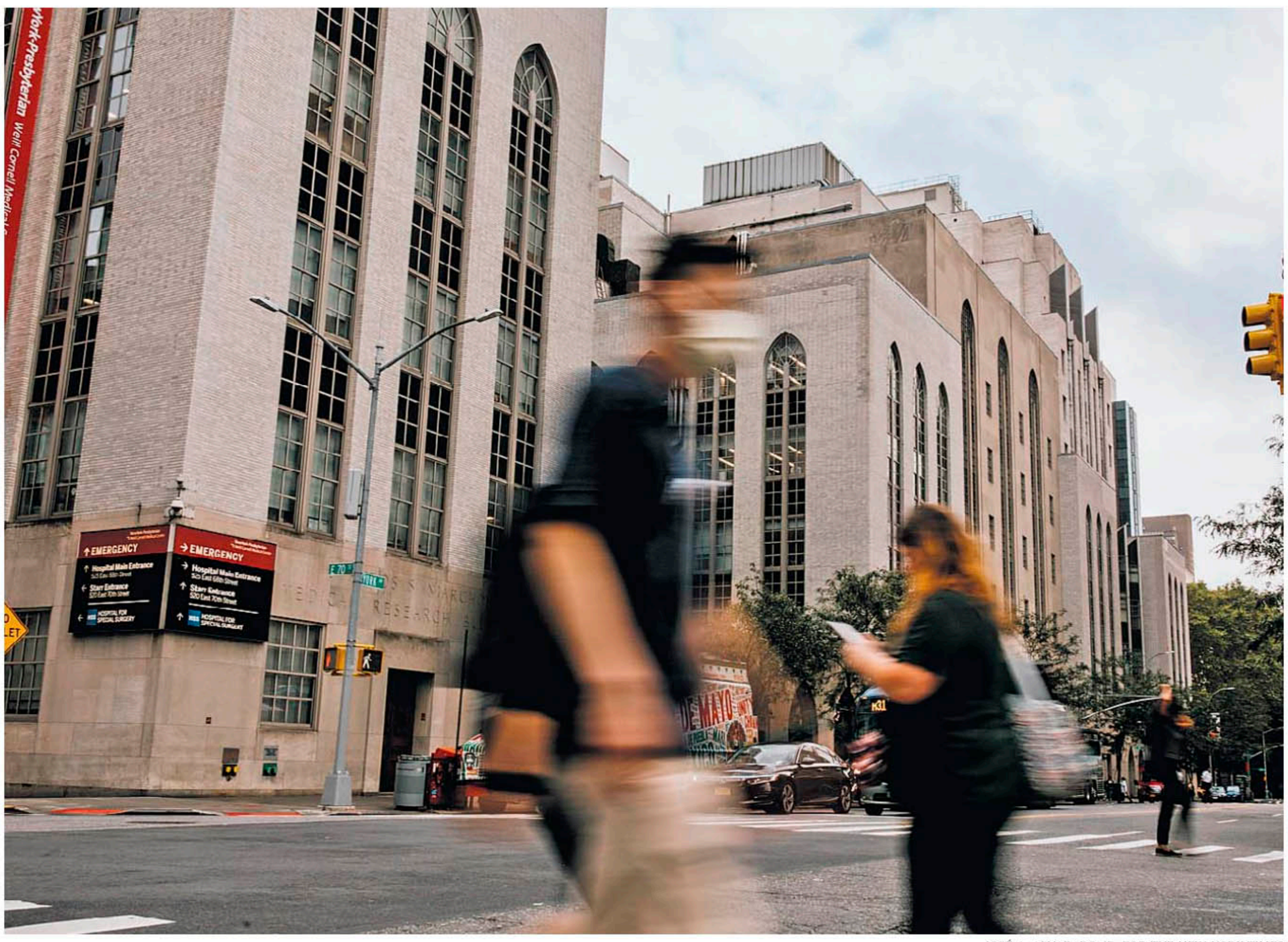
Dr. Gadjradj had experience with clinical research on spine surgery but knew nothing about Burst when he arrived in New York for his two years as a postdoctoral research fellow at Weill Cornell.

He said he got off to a good start working for Dr. Härtl, but their standoff over the Burst research soured their relationship.

Dr. Gadjradj said it was the hospital's lack of transparency with patients that was most troubling to him.

"They can't ring the bell if something goes wrong," said Dr. Gadjradj, who completed his tenure with Dr. Härtl at the end of June and returned home to the Netherlands with plans to finish a residency in neurosurgery. "We don't know because we just discharged them like nothing happened."

Apoorva Mandavilli contributed reporting. Julie Tate contributed research.



JOSÉ A. ALVARADO JR. FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center used a fluid whose manufacturer was later cited for possible contamination.



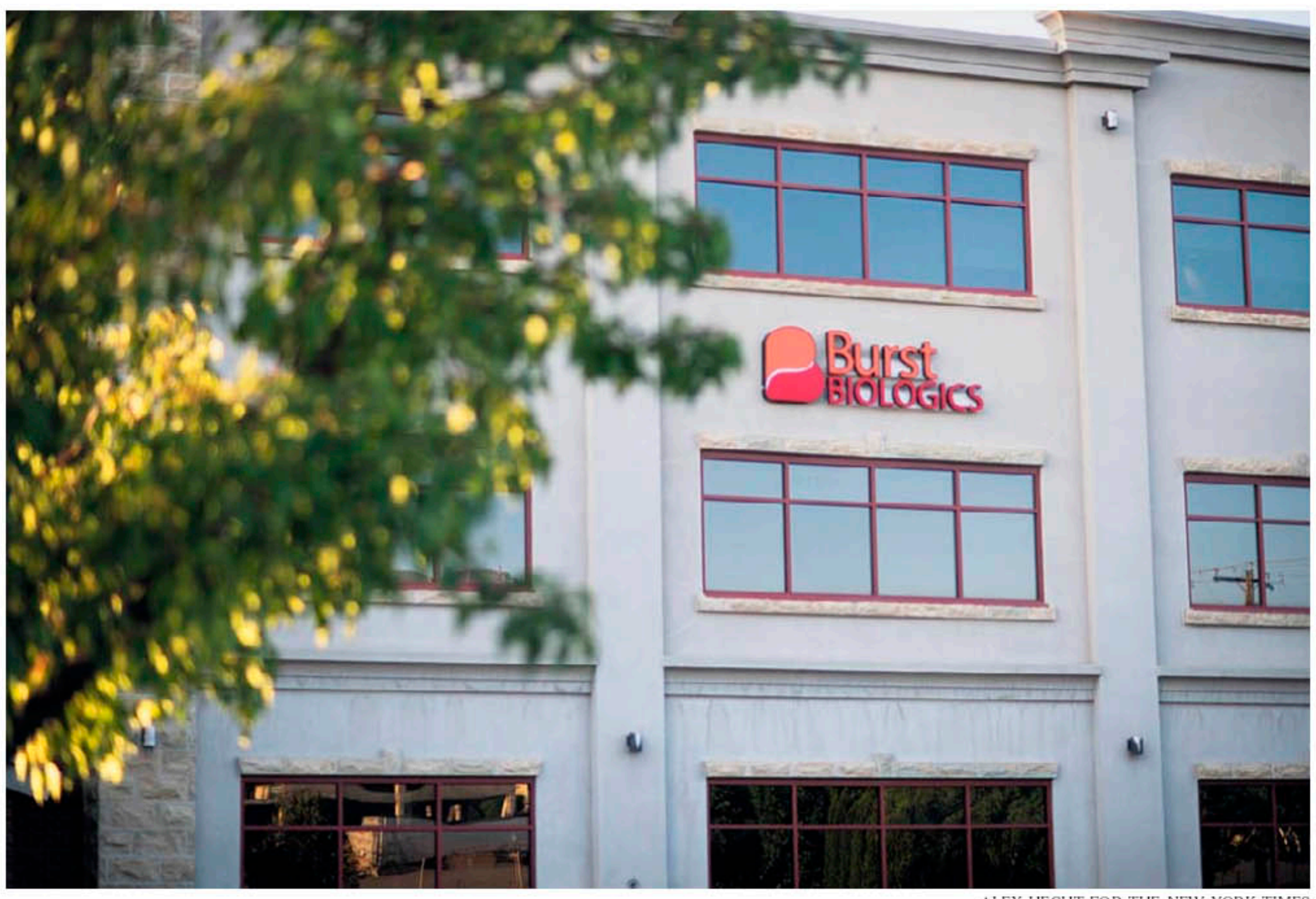
JEREMIE SOUTEYRAT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Dr. Pravesh Gadjradj in London in June. He filed a complaint with the hospital against Dr. Härtl, his former boss.



KATE MEDLEY

Trillitye Paullin, a former research director at Burst Biologics, in Durham, N.C. She filed a complaint about Zika exposure.



ALEX HECHT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Burst Biologics, a small biotechnology company in Boise, Idaho, where problems were found.

DeSantis Denounces Biden And Touts Energy in Texas

By ANJALI HUYNH

MIDLAND, Texas — Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida on Wednesday unveiled an energy plan in the heart of oil country, criticizing electric vehicles and global climate agreements, promising lower fuel prices and pushing for more oil and gas development.

In a policy rollout at an oil rig site in Midland — a West Texas city that derives much of its economy from oil production — Mr. DeSantis seemed to make a general-election argument, promising to roll back several of the Biden administration's climate initiatives, calling them "part of an agenda to control you and to control our behavior."

"They're trying to circumscribe your ambitions. They are even telling our younger generations to have fewer children, or not to even have children, on the grounds that somehow children are going to make our climate and planet unlivable — and that's wrong to say," he told a crowd of a few dozen rig workers and reporters.

Mr. DeSantis mentioned his chief rival in the Republican primary, former President Donald J. Trump — whom he trails by a wide margin in the polls — only once.

That didn't stop Mr. Trump's campaign from taking a shot at the governor for his remarks. Steven Cheung, a Trump spokesman, used expletives in calling Mr. DeSantis a "candidate that just steals from President Trump's policy book" in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, during the governor's remarks.

In a lengthy, six-pronged policy outline, Mr. DeSantis promised to remove subsidies for electric vehicles, take the U.S. out of global climate agreements — including the Paris accord — and cancel net-zero emission promises. He also vowed to increase American oil and natural gas production and "replace the phrase climate change with energy dominance" in policy guidance.

Mr. DeSantis spoke from behind a lectern that read "$2 in 2025," a nod to his campaign's promise to lower gas to $2 in the first year of his administration (a number not seen consistently since the George W. Bush administration). His remarks — delivered above the sounds of heavy machinery — paired standard Republican energy policy, blasting foreign energy dependence and blue state regulations, with criticism of the Biden administration's focus on reducing carbon emissions and incentivizing clean energy.

The Biden campaign criticized Mr. DeSantis's plan.

"This is a deeply unserious and impractical plan that won't actually lower gas prices to $2 per gallon and is chock-full of the climate denialism that defines the MAGA Republican Party," Ammar Moussa, a spokesman for the Biden campaign, said in a statement. "Voters need look no further than DeSantis's own state — where his agenda is leading to skyrocketing energy costs for his constituents and natural disasters are causing tens of billions of dollars in damages — to know what DeSantis's plan would mean for the country."

The Florida governor promised to roll back climate initiatives.

Mr. DeSantis calls his plan "Freedom to Fuel," and it includes a segment on automobiles, an industry segment that has also put Mr. Biden under scrutiny by Republicans, with autoworkers on strike. The United Auto Workers began targeted strikes last week over contract talks.

In a recent opinion piece in The Des Moines Register, Mr. DeSantis promised to "stand with our farmers" by opposing electric vehicles and supporting biofuel usage, a nod to the state's large agricultural industry.

But asked Wednesday if he believed that fossil fuels contributed to climate change, Mr. DeSantis deflected — which he has done repeatedly, most notably on the Republican debate stage last month.

"The climate clearly has changed — you can judge that, I think, objectively. I think the question is, is what policy posture are we going to take from that?" he said, pointing to his own proposal as the "most practical way to reduce global emissions."

During his visit to Texas, Mr. DeSantis is also attending several high-dollar fund-raising events over the next few days. But so far, large donors have expressed hesitation, and he has struggled to gain support from the energy industry. The Oil and Gas Workers Association, based out of nearby Odessa, Texas, announced Wednesday that it would endorse Mr. Trump.

Jimmy Gray, a Midland oil rig worker since 1979 who supported Mr. Trump in the last election, said after the event that he was impressed by Mr. DeSantis but remained undecided in the Republican presidential contest.

"I've seen a lot of policies in a lot of administrations, and a lot of things change throughout that time, but one thing that hasn't really changed is that in order for us to decrease costs across the country, energy — in whatever form that is — has to be done right," he said.

"Ron DeSantis made some good points — he's got me interested," he added. "I just would like to see a different direction than what we've got now."

Hurd Proposes A.I. Policy, A First in the G.O.P. Field

By MAGGIE ASTOR

The policy plan on artificial intelligence released by former Representative Will Hurd of Texas on Wednesday makes him the first candidate in the Republican presidential field to formally propose a way to navigate the uses and dangers of a technology so thorny he likened it to nuclear fission.

"Nuclear fission controlled gives you nuclear power — clean,



Will Hurd called for using artificial intelligence widely but with tight regulation.

cheap, limitless power," Mr. Hurd said in an interview with The New York Times. "Nuclear fission uncontrolled gives you nuclear weapons that can destroy the world. And I think A.I. is equivalent."

The plan, first reported by Axios, takes an expansive view of both the potential and the risks of artificial intelligence. He calls for A.I. to be used much more widely than it currently is — both in administrative tasks within the federal government and in highly sensitive areas like national defense — but also supports regulating the industry more tightly than is typical of many Republicans' approach to private industries.

Among his proposals are calls to ensure compensation when people's intellectual property is used in A.I.-generated content, as well as name, image and likeness protections against so-called deepfakes. He would also seek to require permits for companies that want to build A.I. models and to impose "strict regulations" on exports of A.I. technology, and would reject any exemptions for developers from liability under existing laws.

Artificial intelligence has already begun to change political campaigns themselves, with some operatives using it to write first drafts of fund-raising messages and automate tedious tasks — and to spread disinformation, including fake images of opponents.

Mr. Hurd has struggled to gain traction in the Republican primary field. He did not qualify for the first debate in August because he failed to reach 1 percent support in enough polls, and he remains at risk of failing to meet the even higher thresholds to qualify for the second debate next week.

But that he would be the first candidate to release a formal plan on artificial intelligence tracks with his professional background.

He once worked as a senior adviser at a cybersecurity firm called FusionX, and made cybersecurity one of his main focuses as a legislator. He also led the House Oversight Subcommittee on Information Technology, where he organized hearings on artificial intelligence in 2018, long before it entered the mainstream. After leaving Congress in 2021, he joined the board of OpenAI, the artificial intelligence laboratory that developed ChatGPT.

Current A.I. models have a well-documented tendency to "hallucinate" and provide inaccurate or fabricated information. Mr. Hurd's plan does not address that problem. He said he envisioned A.I. helping migrants learn English and helping students with math, and was "not as concerned" with hallucination in those contexts.

"I think we can achieve the promise of A.I. while minimizing the risk," he said.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DESIREE RIOS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

In places like Fort Towson, Okla., the lack of high-speed internet is a daily frustration, but broadband infrastructure is expensive.

Billions to Give Rural U.S. Fast Internet May Fall Short

From Page A1

The effort is meant to close the "digital divide" by ensuring that all Americans can connect to fast internet, given the critical role it plays in economic opportunities, education, health care and other areas. The Biden administration has also invested more than $22 billion in other programs to build broadband networks and reduce the cost of internet bills.

The lack of broadband infrastructure is particularly problematic in rural areas, where internet service is often unavailable or limited. Roughly 24 percent of Americans in rural areas lack high-speed internet service as defined by the new program, compared with 1.7 percent in urban areas. Research has shown that internet connectivity can fuel economic growth in rural areas, helping to create jobs, attract workers and increase home values.

Attempts to get broadband to everyone are not new: The federal government has already pumped billions into efforts that have had mixed results. Biden administration officials have said the new program, coupled with other federal and state funding, would be enough to finally reach everyone who lacked high-speed internet access.

But some state officials and industry analysts remain wary and have raised concerns about whether the funds will achieve all of the administration's goals.

In part, that's because of the sheer cost of deploying broadband infrastructure in rural and sparsely populated areas. It can be expensive to lay fiber-optic cable when homes are spread far apart and terrain challenges make it difficult to dig in the ground. Labor shortages could further drive up construction costs and delay projects.

There are 8.5 million "unserved" and 3.6 million "underserved" locations across the country, according to Federal Communications Commission data. Each state received a minimum of $100 million from the $42.5 billion bucket, plus additional funds based on its number of unserved locations. States must first address areas that have no or insufficient internet service, and can then use funds to build out in underserved areas. Remaining funds can be used on community institutions and then issues such as affordability.

The success of the initiative is expected to vary across states. Some, like Louisiana and Virginia, have already said they anticipate covering every unserved and underserved location. Others have expressed more skepticism about the funding's reach.

Edyn Rolls, Oklahoma's director of broadband strategy, said that it was unlikely that the state, with its large rural population, would have enough funds to reach every underserved location, and covering all of the unserved areas could be a challenge.

State officials said that recent versions of the F.C.C.'s map showing available internet service across the country had improved, but it could still be overstating coverage. Local governments and providers will be able to challenge existing data, but state allocations are already set, meaning funds would have to be stretched further if officials identified more locations that lacked high-speed service.



In southeastern Oklahoma, expansive cattle ranches and empty storefronts dot the landscape.

Ms. Rolls said there was a "real potential" that such a situation could develop, adding that officials have heard from residents who say there is "definitely an overstatement of service." And even though she said fiber would be a better long-term investment, a mix of technologies would have to be deployed to reach every unserved location.

Even with the grants, companies might not find it profitable to build everywhere. Robert Osborn, director of California's communications division, said some locations in the state, which is geographically diverse with large areas that are hard to reach, are not likely to receive any provider interest. To attract bidders, Mr. Osborn said, the state could in some cases reduce the requirement for providers to cover at least 25 percent of a project's price tag, but that risks drawing money away from other projects.

"It's not as simple as giving money to a major internet service provider and saying, 'Go build there,'" Mr. Osborn said.

Evan Feinman, the director of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's $42.5 billion program, said officials were confident that the federal and state funds would be enough to cover every unserved and underserved location, meaning every American would have access to an internet speed of at least 100 megabits per second for downloads and 20 megabits for uploads.

Still, he said some projects could take as much as five years to complete, and he anticipated construction would not start until late 2024. Although he said most locations would receive fiber connections, he expected others would be covered by fixed wireless or satellite technology.

Satellite is not considered reliable under the program rules, but Mr. Feinman said some services were better than others, and states could use funds for satellite equipment and service for a handful of remote locations. Starlink, a satellite technology made by Elon Musk's SpaceX, is considered to be more reliable, but the hardware costs hundreds of dollars, and it can take months to get off wait lists.

The funding's reach will matter for Americans who have long lacked high-speed internet access. Ms. Finley said she wanted to assign homework that involved more online research, because it would accelerate her fourth-grade students' learning. But many could not complete it. Only three of the 20 students in her homeroom have sufficient internet access at home. The rest do not have service or can use only their parents' cellphones.

There are 8.5 million 'unserved' locations across the country.

A few miles away in Fort Towson, Okla., which has about 600 residents, Mayor Tami Barnes said people complained constantly about internet speeds, which she called a "huge damper" on the local economy. On a recent afternoon, the busiest part of town was the parking lot of a convenience store and gas station. The other two main businesses are a steakhouse and Dollar General store.

Although internet bills are a financial burden for many families, Ms. Barnes said more residents would probably attend medical appointments online if they had high-speed access, because many often travel up to three hours to see specialized doctors.

Other states with low population densities, such as Montana, could also face more challenges. In Broadwater County, Mont., where many homes are separated by vast stretches of grassy land and some are tucked in mountainous areas, residents said the lack of fast service made it difficult to do things like work from home.

Denise Thompson, 58, who operates a cattle ranch with her husband in Townsend, Mont., said she wanted to start a website to ship more beef products, but she was unsure how she could operate it at home because she relied on her phone's hot spot for internet access and her connection was slow. She has not tried streaming a movie in about a year because it is usually stuck buffering for minutes.

Her house sits in a gulch in between two tall hills and her nearest neighbor is about three miles away, so her only other option is satellite service. Even with the new federal money, Ms. Thompson said she was skeptical she would see more reliable options.

"I really don't expect that to happen," she said.

Lindsey Richtmyer, a county commissioner, said many locations would be categorized as underserved but actually received slower service than reflected by the F.C.C.'s map. County officials are encouraging residents to take state speed tests in hopes of identifying much of the area as unserved.

Estimates have found that Montana would need more than $1.2 billion to deploy fiber to all unserved and underserved locations, a shortfall of more than $500 million. Misty Ann Giles, the director of Montana's Department of Administration, said a mix of technologies would be required to reach everyone, because deploying fiber could cost the state up to $300,000 in some locations.

"Obviously more money would have been appreciated," she said. "But we're going to figure it out and make it work."



Tami Barnes, the mayor of Fort Towson, said high-speed internet would let rural residents attend medical appointments online.



Wanda Finley, a fourth-grade teacher in Sawyer, Okla., said the satellite service at her home sometimes goes out for days.

A Sign of Hope in Lahaina: Sprouts on a Beloved Tree

By LIVIA ALBECK-RIPKA

Over the decades, residents have gathered, feasted and proposed marriage beneath the 150-year-old banyan tree in the downtown area of Lahaina, Hawaii. But last month, after a fast-moving blaze tore through the town in West Maui, scorching the tree, some feared that it might not live on.

Then, green shoots began to unfurl around the trunk of the community's sacred giant; others sprouted from its branches between brown and withered leaves.

This week, Hawaii's Department of Land and Natural Resources shared a video that showed bright green leaves on the tree, describing them as "positive signs for its long-term recovery." The department noted the work of arborists volunteering their time and expertise to nurse the banyan back to health.

"When we saw the first new leaves starting to pop on the canopy of the tree, that's when we got really, really excited," said Chris Imonti, a landscape contractor who has spent the past several weeks carefully tending to the banyan. For many locals, he added, its regrowth symbolizes "hope, and maybe some normalcy down the line."

On Aug. 8, wildfires swept across the island of Maui and killed at least 97 people. Most of Lahaina, a community of 13,000 that was once the capital of the Hawaiian kingdom, was destroyed.

The tree, a Ficus benghalensis, or banyan fig, was just eight feet tall when it was planted in 1873 to commemorate a Protestant mission to Lahaina a half-century earlier. Years of careful tending by residents helped the tree grow, according to the Lahaina Restoration Foundation, a nonprofit preservation organization that describes the tree as the largest of its kind in the United States. Towering more than 60 feet near an old courthouse, the banyan tree has become a cherished landmark for locals.

In the immediate aftermath of the fire, some arborists and foresters feared the worst for the tree. Its trunk appeared badly charred, and its canopy — which had grown to cover more than half an acre — was burned, its leaves browned to a crisp.

But Mr. Imonti said that when he visited the site around a week later, he was pleasantly surprised to find living microbes in the soil, as well as some root growth and green tissue inside the trunk. "The tree was technically in major shock but was still alive," he said.

For the next several days, contractors and construction companies rallied to deliver 5,000 to 10,000 gallons of water a day to the banyan, soaking the soil in an attempt to nurse the tree's roots back to health, Mr. Imonti said. The next step was dousing the foliage and surrounding area in a liquid concoction, called "compost tea," that includes worm castings, sea minerals and kelp to hasten the tree's uptake of nutrients and minerals. After the second treatment, "we saw a lot of new root growth," Mr. Imonti said. By the third, new shoots began to appear.

While he and others are hopeful for the tree's full recovery, they caution that it will take some time and may not be complete. Nearby, other trees, including historic breadfruit or ulu trees, which are culturally significant to native Hawaiians, are also needing extra care in the wake of the fire, he and others said.



PHILIP CHEUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The 150-year-old banyan tree in Lahaina, Hawaii, in West Maui was damaged in the wildfires.



HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND RESOURCES

New leaves grew on the tree. Volunteers caring for the tree are cautiously optimistic.

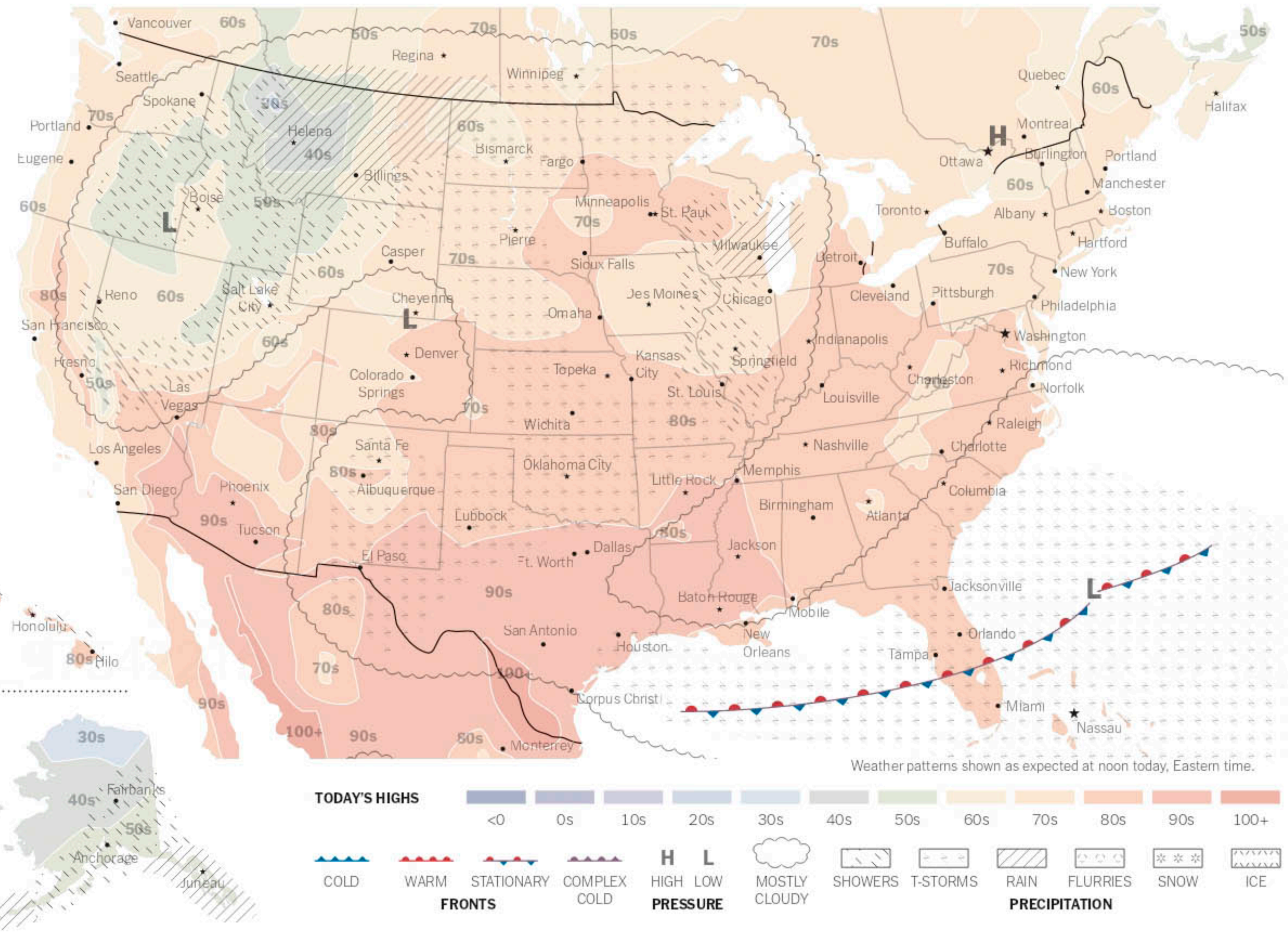
Steve Nimz, a volunteer arborist who has been helping to restore the banyan, said that he was optimistic, given that trees have long adapted to severe conditions such as hurricanes, storms and fire. "It's not like they haven't been through this before, through the millions of years they've been around, so they do adapt," he said.

He cautioned that it might be too soon to identify the lasting effects of the fire. "Just because the new leaves come out doesn't mean the tree is going to completely make it — it just means that the tree is moving in the right direction," Mr. Nimz said.

"The tree's going to be talking to us," he added. "And we're going to listen to the tree."

Weather Report

Meteorology by AccuWeather



Metropolitan Forecast

TODAY ....Mostly sunny and dry

High 74. It will be dry. Winds will be light at 4 to 8 miles per hour. Temperatures will remain around average.

TONIGHT ....Partly cloudy

Low 58. Dry conditions will continue at night with a partly cloudy sky. Winds will be light at 4 to 8 m.p.h. Low temperatures will be slightly below average.

TOMORROW ..Some sunshine, then clouds

High 70. Dry conditions will continue, with sunshine giving way to clouds throughout the day. Winds will be at 6 to 12 m.p.h. Temperatures will be around average.

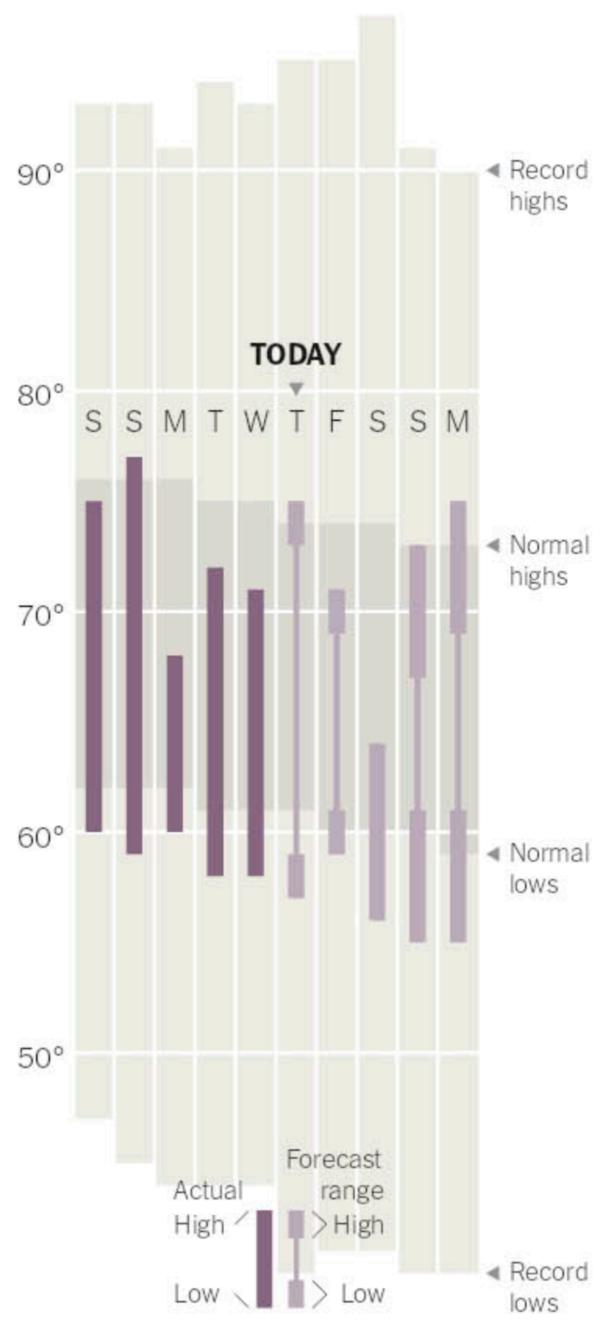
SATURDAY ....Breezy with rain, cool

A storm will move up the coast, bringing rain to the area. There will be a gusty breeze at 10 to 20 m.p.h. with a cloudy sky. It will be cool for late September. High 62.

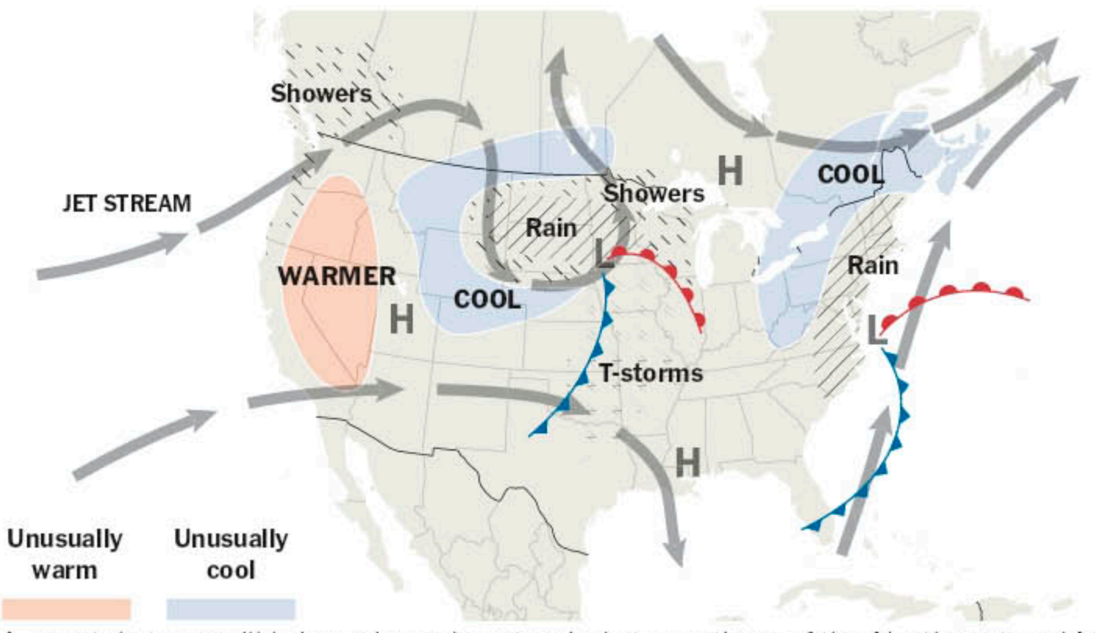
SUNDAY MONDAY ....Turning drier

On Sunday, rain may continue for part of the storm. High 70. Monday will have a mostly sunny sky. High 72.

On Sunday, rain may continue for part of the day, depending on the speed of the storm. High 70. Monday will have a mostly sunny sky. High 72.



Highlight: The Weekend Outlook



A coastal storm will bring rain and gusty winds to portions of the Northeast and Middle Atlantic region this weekend. Thunderstorms may produce large hail and strong wind gusts across the nation's midsection, while a steady rain falls over the northern Plains.

National Forecast

High pressure off the Middle Atlantic coast will allow dry weather to persist from southern New England into the Tennessee Valley and Carolinas. However, farther south, a stalled front across the Florida Peninsula will generate rounds of showers and thunderstorms across much of the state, leading to flooding.

A storm moving through the Intermountain West will produce showers and thunderstorms that could be heavy at times. Thunderstorms from this system will spread into parts of northern Minnesota.

Meanwhile, much of the Southwest will stay dry with the exception of thunderstorms in eastern New Mexico. Some storms could be strong to severe and bring gusty winds and hail.

Metropolitan Almanac

In Central Park, for the 13 hours ended at 1 p.m. yesterday.

Temperature



Avg. daily departure from normal this month .... +2.4°

Avg. daily departure from normal this year .... +2.3°

Reservoir levels (New York City water supply)

Yesterday 91%
Est. normal 78%

Precipitation (in inches)

Yesterday 0.00
Record 2.32

For the last 30 days
Actual 6.72
Normal 4.24

For the last 365 days
Actual 52.47
Normal 49.52

LAST 30 DAYS

Air pressure

High .... 30.21 11 a.m.
Low .... 30.12 2 a.m.

Humidity

High .... 71% 8 a.m.
Low .... 45% noon

Cooling Degree Days

An index of fuel consumption that tracks how far the day's mean temperature rose above 65

Yesterday.. 0
So far this month....................................... 176
So far this season (since January 1) 1194
Normal to date for the season 1177

Trends

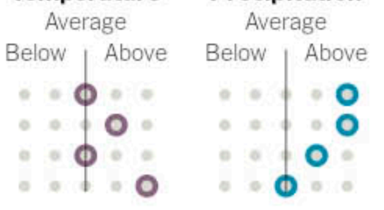


Chart shows how recent temperature and precipitation trends compare with those of the last 30 years.

Recreational Forecast

Sun, Moon and Planets

First Quarter	Full	Last Quarter	New
Sep. 22	Sep. 29 5:57 a.m.	Oct. 6	Oct. 14 1:53 p.m.

Sun	**RISE**	6:42 a.m.	**Moon**	**R**	1:29 p.m.
	SET	6:56 p.m.		**S**	10:20 p.m.
	NEXT R	6:43 a.m.		**R**	2:36 p.m.
Jupiter	**S**	10:45 a.m.	**Mars**	**R**	8:13 a.m.
	R	8:51 p.m.		**S**	7:38 p.m.
Saturn	**S**	4:35 a.m.	**Venus**	**R**	3:26 a.m.
	R	5:56 p.m.		**S**	4:53 p.m.

Boating

From Montauk Point to Sandy Hook, N.J., out to 20 nautical miles, including Long Island Sound and New York Harbor.

Winds will be out of the north at 5-10 knots. Waves will be around 1 foot on New York Harbor and Long Island Sound. On the open ocean, waves will be around 3-4 feet. Visibility will be unrestricted.

High Tides

Atlantic City	12:10 p.m.	---
Barnegat Inlet	12:31 p.m.	---
The Battery	12:23 a.m.	12:51 p.m.
Beach Haven	1:22 a.m.	1:52 p.m.
Bridgeport	3:55 a.m.	4:09 p.m.
City Island	3:36 a.m.	3:53 p.m.
Fire Island Lt.	12:50 a.m.	1:20 p.m.
Montauk Point	1:43 a.m.	1:58 p.m.
Northport	3:59 a.m.	4:19 p.m.
Port Washington	3:44 a.m.	4:05 p.m.
Sandy Hook	12:04 a.m.	12:34 p.m.
Shinnecock Inlet	12:04 a.m.	12:31 p.m.
Stamford	3:53 a.m.	4:13 p.m.
Tarrytown	2:12 a.m.	2:40 p.m.
Willets Point	3:37 a.m.	3:53 p.m.

Beach and Ocean Temperatures



Dry conditions will continue as an area of high pressure remains overhead. The sky will be partly to mostly sunny. Temperatures will be near average. The wind will be light along the coast and visibility will be unrestricted to the horizon.

Cities

High/low temperatures for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday, Eastern time, and precipitation (in inches) for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday. Expected conditions for today and tomorrow.

C	Clouds	**S**	Sun
F	Fog	**Sn**	Snow
H	Haze	**SS**	Snow showers
I	Ice	**T**	Thunderstorms
PC	Partly cloudy	**Tr**	Trace
R	Rain	**W**	Windy
Sh	Showers	**–**	Not available

N.Y.C. region	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
New York City	71/ 58 0	74/ 58 S	72/ 60 PC
Bridgeport	71/ 53 0	73/ 55 S	70/ 59 PC
Caldwell	75/ 51 0	73/ 51 S	73/ 55 PC
Danbury	71/ 47 0	73/ 50 S	71/ 52 PC
Islip	71/ 57 0	73/ 59 S	73/ 58 PC
Newark	77/ 56 0	76/ 56 S	75/ 58 PC
Trenton	72/ 50 0	74/ 51 S	71/ 57 PC
White Plains	71/ 51 0	71/ 52 S	70/ 55 PC

United States	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Albany	71/ 46 0	71/ 51 S	74/ 52 PC
Albuquerque	80/ 58 0	83/ 57 PC	81/ 59 S
Anchorage	48/ 41 0.17	53/ 39 C	53/ 39 S
Atlanta	82/ 64 0	80/ 63 PC	81/ 63 S
Atlantic City	77/ 60 0	73/ 61 S	72/ 63 W
Austin	97/ 73 0	97/ 74 PC	98/ 76 PC
Baltimore	80/ 56 0	81/ 60 S	75/ 62 C
Baton Rouge	94/ 70 0	93/ 74 S	91/ 73 PC
Birmingham	85/ 66 0	84/ 64 S	85/ 63 PC
Boise	71/ 43 0	64/ 44 Sh	68/ 47 PC
Boston	75/ 56 0	70/ 56 S	69/ 58 S
Buffalo	70/ 47 0	76/ 49 S	77/ 53 S
Burlington	69/ 50 0	70/ 49 S	73/ 54 S
Casper	74/ 44 0.03	74/ 47 PC	69/ 41 T
Charlotte	82/ 59 0	81/ 62 PC	79/ 59 PC
Chattanooga	84/ 61 0	84/ 62 PC	84/ 63 S
Chicago	80/ 62 0.05	77/ 65 PC	81/ 63 PC
Cincinnati	83/ 58 0	84/ 60 S	83/ 59 S
Cleveland	77/ 59 0	78/ 59 PC	79/ 59 S
Colorado Springs	79/ 51 0	79/ 49 S	80/ 46 S
Columbus	80/ 56 0	83/ 59 S	84/ 55 S
Concord, N.H.	73/ 44 0	74/ 45 S	75/ 47 PC
Dallas-Ft. Worth	97/ 76 Tr	92/ 76 T	96/ 77 PC
Denver	81/ 53 0	81/ 51 PC	79/ 46 S
Des Moines	78/ 58 0.04	75/ 60 C	78/ 64 T
Detroit	76/ 60 0.02	80/ 61 PC	78/ 58 S
El Paso	96/ 70 0	92/ 70 PC	96/ 69 S
Fargo	85/ 58 0	83/ 57 T	83/ 63 T
Hartford	75/ 47 0	74/ 49 S	73/ 52 PC
Honolulu	91/ 77 0.02	90/ 77 Sh	91/ 76 Sh
Houston	93/ 75 0	95/ 75 S	94/ 75 S
Indianapolis	83/ 60 0	83/ 61 S	85/ 59 S
Jackson	92/ 68 0	94/ 70 S	91/ 68 PC
Jacksonville	88/ 69 0.04	82/ 69 T	82/ 64 T
Kansas City	76/ 60 0	81/ 65 PC	80/ 67 T
Key West	90/ 81 0.01	90/ 80 T	89/ 79 PC
Las Vegas	89/ 69 0	88/ 63 S	87/ 68 S
Lexington	85/ 58 0	86/ 58 S	87/ 56 S
Little Rock	84/ 67 0.04	92/ 71 S	83/ 66 T
Los Angeles	76/ 63 0	71/ 58 PC	74/ 60 PC
Louisville	86/ 61 0	86/ 62 S	88/ 62 S
Memphis	89/ 69 0.04	90/ 69 S	85/ 69 T
Miami	89/ 77 0.48	88/ 75 T	88/ 74 T
Milwaukee	79/ 62 0.05	77/ 66 C	77/ 62 PC
Mpls.-St. Paul	83/ 61 0	81/ 61 PC	77/ 61 T
Nashville	86/ 64 0	86/ 61 S	87/ 63 S
New Orleans	89/ 75 0	89/ 76 S	90/ 74 S
Norfolk	80/ 65 0	79/ 69 PC	75/ 68 R
Oklahoma City	90/ 67 0	83/ 67 T	87/ 71 T
Omaha	82/ 58 0	80/ 61 C	81/ 64 T
Orlando	86/ 72 0.45	86/ 72 T	88/ 70 T
Philadelphia	76/ 56 0	77/ 56 S	73/ 62 PC
Phoenix	102/ 73 0	99/ 73 S	95/ 75 S
Pittsburgh	76/ 54 0	80/ 55 F	77/ 55 PC
Portland, Me.	72/ 50 0	73/ 50 S	69/ 52 PC
Portland, Ore.	70/ 51 0.02	75/ 53 S	80/ 56 PC
Providence	74/ 52 0	72/ 53 S	71/ 55 PC
Raleigh	85/ 60 0	83/ 62 C	76/ 61 R
Reno	81/ 47 0	64/ 45 Sh	73/ 47 S
Richmond	85/ 59 0	83/ 62 C	75/ 61 C
Rochester	68/ 43 0	72/ 45 S	76/ 49 S
Sacramento	83/ 53 0	83/ 54 PC	82/ 52 S
Salt Lake City	83/ 57 0.02	65/ 50 T	62/ 49 T
San Antonio	98/ 76 0	98/ 76 PC	99/ 77 S
San Diego	73/ 66 0	74/ 64 C	74/ 66 PC
San Francisco	71/ 56 0	71/ 57 PC	71/ 57 S
San Jose	80/ 54 0	77/ 55 PC	78/ 54 S
San Juan	94/ 80 0.04	92/ 80 C	93/ 80 T
Seattle	64/ 48 0.05	71/ 50 S	74/ 52 PC
Sioux Falls	85/ 58 0	81/ 58 PC	79/ 61 T
Spokane	58/ 46 0.05	63/ 49 S	62/ 48 S
St. Louis	78/ 65 0.04	83/ 67 Sh	82/ 65 T
St. Thomas	93/ 81 0	92/ 81 T	92/ 81 PC
Syracuse	71/ 46 0	72/ 48 F	75/ 52 PC
Tampa	87/ 74 0.86	88/ 73 T	89/ 72 T
Toledo	82/ 57 0.05	83/ 58 S	81/ 55 S
Tucson	93/ 67 0	95/ 66 S	95/ 67 S
Tulsa	84/ 67 0.30	83/ 67 T	82/ 70 T
Virginia Beach	80/ 64 0	79/ 68 PC	76/ 69 R
Washington	81/ 61 0	82/ 63 S	74/ 62 PC
Wichita	85/ 66 0	81/ 64 T	81/ 66 T
Wilmington, Del.	78/ 53 0	79/ 53 S	74/ 58 PC

Africa	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Algiers	86/ 73 0.15	85/ 64 S	84/ 64 PC
Cairo	90/ 74 0	90/ 73 S	91/ 72 S
Cape Town	64/ 49 0	64/ 53 R	66/ 50 C
Dakar	89/ 78 0.22	91/ 80 T	90/ 81 T
Johannesburg	81/ 56 0	82/ 56 S	84/ 59 S
Nairobi	84/ 60 0.04	82/ 60 PC	81/ 60 PC
Tunis	91/ 75 0	95/ 72 S	93/ 74 S

Asia/Pacific	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Baghdad	112/ 75 0	110/ 74 S	111/ 77 S
Bangkok	95/ 79 0.01	95/ 78 T	95/ 79 T
Beijing	83/ 56 0	82/ 61 S	83/ 60 C
Damascus	93/ 59 0	94/ 59 S	98/ 60 S
Hong Kong	90/ 80 0.10	92/ 80 S	92/ 80 C
Jakarta	95/ 75 0	93/ 74 Sh	94/ 75 Sh
Jerusalem	81/ 64 0	84/ 64 S	87/ 65 S
Karachi	95/ 81 0.28	95/ 81 PC	95/ 81 S
Manila	93/ 75 0.08	93/ 79 T	92/ 79 T
Mumbai	88/ 80 0.94	88/ 79 Sh	86/ 79 R
New Delhi	97/ 78 0	93/ 80 T	94/ 80 T
Riyadh	104/ 82 0	106/ 81 PC	108/ 80 S
Seoul	78/ 68 1.12	77/ 58 PC	82/ 58 S
Shanghai	82/ 75 0.20	81/ 68 C	77/ 70 R
Singapore	88/ 77 0.10	89/ 78 T	87/ 77 T
Sydney	95/ 70 0	72/ 56 S	67/ 53 Sh
Taipei City	89/ 78 0	95/ 77 T	94/ 77 S
Tehran	89/ 63 0	86/ 67 S	87/ 67 S
Tokyo	90/ 77 0.13	87/ 79 W	84/ 71 T

Europe	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Amsterdam	69/ 62 0	65/ 53 R	61/ 52 Sh
Athens	86/ 68 0	84/ 72 PC	86/ 70 S
Berlin	77/ 57 0	82/ 61 S	67/ 54 Sh
Brussels	71/ 60 0	66/ 53 R	62/ 49 PC
Budapest	81/ 56 0	80/ 60 PC	84/ 63 C
Copenhagen	69/ 62 0.20	72/ 63 S	66/ 56 C
Dublin	63/ 54 0.33	59/ 47 Sh	57/ 41 PC
Edinburgh	64/ 55 0.38	59/ 49 W	61/ 42 Sh
Frankfurt	78/ 56 0	74/ 55 Sh	68/ 48 PC
Geneva	75/ 52 0	74/ 56 Sh	68/ 53 Sh
Helsinki	63/ 56 0.18	69/ 57 PC	71/ 61 S
Istanbul	81/ 65 0	79/ 64 S	80/ 66 S
Kyiv	77/ 60 0.15	75/ 56 PC	79/ 58 S
Lisbon	72/ 59 0	73/ 59 Sh	74/ 58 PC
London	68/ 62 0.70	65/ 49 Sh	63/ 46 PC
Madrid	78/ 54 0	66/ 52 Sh	70/ 47 PC
Moscow	75/ 52 0	67/ 57 C	73/ 51 PC
Nice	75/ 67 0.20	75/ 68 Sh	74/ 61 C
Oslo	59/ 46 0.16	65/ 59 R	63/ 51 R
Paris	77/ 60 0	65/ 53 R	67/ 49 Sh
Prague	77/ 52 0	77/ 58 S	66/ 51 R
Rome	81/ 67 0.04	80/ 68 T	82/ 68 PC
St. Petersburg	64/ 55 0.49	69/ 54 C	73/ 58 S
Stockholm	63/ 49 0.19	69/ 57 PC	66/ 51 R
Vienna	79/ 55 0	81/ 61 PC	81/ 59 PC
Warsaw	74/ 51 0	80/ 60 S	80/ 60 Sh

North America	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Acapulco	91/ 76 0	92/ 76 S	92/ 76 PC
Bermuda	84/ 77 0.03	81/ 75 Sh	83/ 76 T
Edmonton	52/ 42 0.18	62/ 39 S	70/ 48 W
Guadalajara	79/ 62 0	86/ 62 S	88/ 62 PC
Havana	91/ 71 0.15	91/ 70 T	91/ 69 PC
Kingston	94/ 83 0	93/ 83 T	93/ 82 T
Martinique	92/ 76 0.22	91/ 76 T	91/ 75 T
Mexico City	74/ 55 0	81/ 56 PC	82/ 57 PC
Monterrey	90/ 69 0	94/ 71 S	95/ 71 S
Montreal	66/ 51 0	71/ 51 S	74/ 53 S
Nassau	88/ 75 0.06	87/ 75 T	88/ 75 T
Panama City	88/ 75 0.31	89/ 75 R	89/ 76 T
Quebec City	67/ 54 0.02	71/ 47 S	71/ 49 S
Santo Domingo	92/ 75 0	93/ 75 S	92/ 74 T
Toronto	66/ 47 0	71/ 56 S	73/ 57 S
Vancouver	61/ 51 0.06	65/ 49 S	66/ 52 PC
Winnipeg	69/ 54 0	69/ 54 C	73/ 54 C

South America	Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
Buenos Aires	62/ 58 0.04	68/ 60 C	65/ 57 PC
Caracas	93/ 75 0.14	93/ 75 PC	94/ 75 T
Lima	69/ 66 0	72/ 66 PC	72/ 65 PC
Quito	70/ 41 0.04	75/ 42 Sh	72/ 43 PC
Recife	84/ 77 0.03	83/ 76 PC	84/ 75 PC
Rio de Janeiro	81/ 71 0	84/ 72 S	85/ 74 S
Santiago	60/ 47 0	67/ 49 C	62/ 49 C

Two Candidates Straddle Eligibility Ahead of the Second G.O.P. Debate

By NEIL VIGDOR

After eking their way into the first Republican presidential debate last month, Gov. Doug Burgum of North Dakota and former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, long-shot candidates, appear to be in jeopardy of failing to qualify for the party's second debate next week.

Both have been registering support in the low single digits in national polls and in the polls from early nominating states that the Republican National Committee uses to determine eligibility.

The threshold is higher for this debate, happening on Wednesday at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, Calif. Several better-known G.O.P. rivals are expected to make the cut — but the candidate who is perhaps best known, former President Donald J. Trump, is again planning to skip the debate.

Mr. Trump, who remains the overwhelming front-runner for the party's nomination despite a maelstrom of indictments against him, will instead give a speech to striking union autoworkers in Michigan.

Some of Mr. Trump's harshest critics in the G.O.P. have stepped up calls for the party's bottom-tier candidates to leave the crowded race, consolidating support for a more viable alternative to the former president.

Lance Trover, a spokesman for the Burgum campaign, contended in an email on Wednesday that Mr. Burgum was still positioned to qualify for the debate. Mr. Hutchinson's campaign did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Emma Vaughn, a spokeswoman for the R.N.C., said in an email on Wednesday that candidates have until 48 hours before the debate to qualify. She declined to comment further about which ones had already done so.

Contenders may strive to qualify for the stage until a 48-hour cutoff.

Before the first debate on Aug. 23, the R.N.C. announced it was raising its polling and fund-raising thresholds to qualify for the second debate, which will be televised by Fox Business. Candidates must now register at least 3 percent support in a minimum of two national polls accepted by the R.N.C. The threshold for the first debate was 1 percent.

Debate organizers will also recognize a combination of one national poll and polls from at least two of the following early nominating states: Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina.

"While debate stages are nice, we know there is no such thing as a national primary," Mr. Trover said in a statement, adding, "Voters in Iowa and New Hampshire are the real people that narrow the field."

Mr. Burgum's campaign has a plan to give him a boost just before the debate, Mr. Trover added, targeting certain Republicans and conservative-leaning independents through video text messages. A super PAC supporting Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, who is running a distant second to Mr. Trump in Republican polls, has used a similar text messaging strategy.

Mr. Burgum, a former software executive, is also harnessing his wealth to introduce himself to Republicans through television — and at considerable expense. Since the first debate, a super PAC aligned with him has booked about $8 million in national broadcast, live sports and radio advertising, including a $2 million infusion last week, according to Mr. Burgum's campaign, which is a separate entity. His TV ads appeared during Monday Night Football on ESPN.

As of Wednesday, there were six Republicans who appeared to be meeting the national polling requirement, according to FiveThirtyEight, a polling aggregation site.

That list was led by Mr. Trump, who is ahead of Mr. DeSantis by an average of more than 40 percentage points. The list also includes the multimillionaire entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy; Nikki Haley, the former South Carolina governor and Mr. Trump's United Nations ambassador; former Vice President Mike Pence; and former Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey.





KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES KC MCGINNIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum, left, and the former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson are both considered long-shot candidates.

And while Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina was averaging only 2.4 percent support nationally as of Wednesday, he is also expected to make the debate stage by relying on a combination of national and early nominating state polls to qualify.

Mr. Scott has performed better in places like Iowa and his home state than in national polls, and his campaign has pressed the R.N.C. to place more emphasis on early nominating states.

The R.N.C. also lifted its fund-raising benchmarks for the second debate. Only candidates who have received financial support from 50,000 donors will make the debate stage — 10,000 more than they needed for the first debate. They must also have at least 200 donors in 20 or more states or territories.

While Mr. Burgum's campaign said that it had reached the fund-raising threshold, it was not immediately clear whether Mr. Hutchinson had.

Both candidates resorted to some unusual tactics to qualify for the first debate.

Mr. Burgum offered $20 gift cards to anyone who gave at least $1 to his campaign, while Politico reported that Mr. Hutchinson had paid college students for each person they could persuade to contribute to his campaign.

Candidates will still be required to sign a loyalty pledge promising to support the eventual Republican nominee, something that Mr. Trump refused to do before skipping the first debate.

Shane Goldmacher contributed reporting.

Trump Moves To Lock Up Iowa Support

By MICHAEL GOLD

DUBUQUE, Iowa — Even as former President Donald J. Trump faces a crowded field of Republican primary challengers, he has kept a relatively light campaign schedule, particularly in Iowa, the first state to hold a nominating contest in the 2024 election.

But with less than four months until Iowa's caucuses, Mr. Trump and his team on Wednesday began a more concerted effort to lock up his support there, starting with two events in eastern Iowa — the first of five planned visits to the state over the next six weeks.

The increased pace of Mr. Trump's Iowa trips, along with a six-figure advertising purchase by a super PAC supporting him, suggest a stronger push by his campaign and supporters to shut down his rivals before any can pose a threat.

Speaking at a "commit to caucus" event in Maquoketa, Mr. Trump said he hoped to improve on his showing in Iowa in 2016, when he was the runner-up to Senator Ted Cruz of Texas.

"We're asking for a commitment," Mr. Trump told the crowd. "Everybody do whatever they can. Get three people at a minimum and come out, bring them with you."

With Mr. Trump holding a commanding lead among Republicans both in national surveys and in Iowa polls, some rivals have made barnstorming the state a cornerstone of their strategies, hoping a victory there could help them coalesce support in later primaries.

For Mr. Trump, winning Iowa next year could hinder any of his challengers from building the momentum required to knock him off his perch as the Republican front-runner.

Mr. Trump's Wednesday visit was just his eighth trip to Iowa this year, far fewer than the other candidates have made. Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, who frequently polls as Mr. Trump's strongest rival, has made Iowa a particular focal point, planning to visit all 99 of its counties and building a robust state operation.

Yet even as an Emerson College poll released last week showed Mr. Trump's support among Iowa Republican voters slipping somewhat over the past four months, he still remained 35 percentage points ahead of Mr. DeSantis.

Becky Hauder of Dubuque, who caucused for Mr. Trump in 2016, rejected the idea that he had not campaigned in Iowa enough to win over voters.

"He's here today," Ms. Hauder, 55, said as she stood in line awaiting Mr. Trump's first event in Maquoketa. "And I know he'll be back. I know Iowa is very important, and he's always come here in the past."

The event in Maquoketa was a more traditional Iowa campaign event, with a crowd of hundreds assembled in a more intimate setting than Mr. Trump's enormous arena rallies. Unlike at those rallies, Mr. Trump took questions from his supporters.

The gathering reflected the Trump campaign's renewed push to convert the former president's popularity to in-person support in January. Mr. Trump said in 2016 that his campaign's ground game was weak, and supporters have raised similar concerns this year.

Mr. Trump's campaign has planned at least two similar events, a frequent feature of the Iowa campaigning process, in the next month. Yet he has eschewed other traditional Iowa events, including large multicandidate ones like a major gathering of evangelical Christians held on Saturday.

Mr. Trump has remained popular with evangelical voters, even as he has expressed views that might normally alienate them. The former president, whose appointments to the Supreme Court paved the way for the overturning of Roe v. Wade, has been noncommittal on endorsing a federal abortion ban.

Nicholas Nehamas contributed reporting.

Lawyers Hint at Defense Strategy for Trump Electors in Georgia Case

By RICHARD FAUSSET and DANNY HAKIM

ATLANTA — Lawyers for three Georgia Republicans charged in a racketeering indictment for casting false Electoral College votes for former President Donald J. Trump offered a glimpse of their defense strategy on Wednesday, telling a federal judge that they submitted the votes as part of their "duty" under federal law.

The three defendants — David Shafer, the former chairman of the Georgia Republican Party; Cathy Latham, a party activist from a rural part of the state; and State Senator Shawn Still — were among 16 Republicans recruited to cast electoral votes for Mr. Trump at the Georgia State Capitol on Dec. 14, 2020, the same day that the legitimate electors for President Biden met to cast their votes for him.

The three are among 19 people, including Mr. Trump, who were charged last month in an indictment that sketches out a multifaceted scheme to illegally overturn the former president's 2020 election loss in Georgia. Crucial to the plan, the indictment says, was an effort to recruit Trump loyalists to "convene and cast false Electoral College votes" in Georgia.

On Wednesday morning, lawyers for the three fake electors squared off against prosecutors from the Fulton County district attorney's office in a hearing over whether the three were serving as "federal officers." Such a designation could allow them to move their cases from state court to the federal system, where the jury pool would be somewhat more supportive of Mr. Trump.

The defense lawyers are hoping that Judge Steve C. Jones of U.S. District Court will move the case to federal court — or throw out their clients' cases completely.

At the hearing, the lawyers for the would-be electors said that their clients had believed they were legally preserving Mr. Trump's rights in case a lawsuit challenging the election at the time ended up in his favor.

That lawsuit was filed by Mr. Trump and Mr. Shafer four days before the so-called safe harbor deadline of Dec. 8, 2020, when state-level election challenges were supposed to be wrapped up. Craig Gillen, a lawyer for Mr. Shafer, noted that a judge had not ruled on the lawsuit by the deadline. Therefore, he argued, Georgia, under federal law, lost its authority to decide who the legitimate electors were.



BEN GRAY/ASSOCIATED PRESS

David Shafer, center, led a meeting at Georgia's Capitol in December 2020 where false electoral votes were cast for Donald J. Trump.

That made it incumbent upon the Republican electors to cast votes for Mr. Trump, he said, so that Congress could decide which electoral votes from Georgia to ultimately count.

"They did their duty," Mr. Gillen said, arguing that they should be considered "contingent electors," and not "fake electors," as described by prosecutors and reporters.

"It's just too easy to say 'fake' without digging into what the law says," he said.

Anna Cross, a special prosecutor, countered that the electors had acted not out of duty, but in their own self-interest, and in the interest of their preferred candidate. She called the lawsuit filed by Mr. Shafer and Mr. Trump "meritless," and said that the filing of such a suit just before the deadline should not be allowed to cause electoral "chaos." (The lawsuit was voluntarily withdrawn by the plaintiffs on Jan. 7, 2021.)

Legal motions revolve around the words 'contingent' and 'fake.'

Not only were the electors not federal officials, Ms. Cross said, but they "were no electors at all."

While the hearing played out in federal court, pretrial jockeying continued in state court, where defense lawyers are seeking other ways to strengthen their hand as an Oct. 23 trial date for two of the 19 defendants, the lawyers Sidney Powell and Kenneth Chesebro, approaches. On Tuesday, Judge Scott McAfee of Fulton County Superior Court ruled that defense lawyers could interview members of the grand jury that returned the indictment against Mr. Trump and his co-defendants — but only those who were willing to be questioned.

On Wednesday, the office of Fani T. Willis, the Fulton County district attorney, filed a notice pointing to potential conflicts of interest for several of the defense lawyers, though it was unclear if any were serious enough to merit action from Judge McAfee. Many of the suggested conflicts related to having prior connections to witnesses who might be called to testify during a trial.

One of the state's witnesses mentioned in the filing was L. Lin Wood, one of the lawyers who sought to overturn Mr. Trump's 2020 election loss. After the election, Mr. Wood, who was not charged in the case, embraced conspiracy theories and extreme rhetoric, at one point calling for putting former Vice President Mike Pence before a firing squad.

In an interview, Mr. Wood said that he had been subpoenaed to testify but that he has nothing worthwhile to say.

"A lot of people are putting out stories that I'm a government snitch or I flipped on President Trump," he said. "That's just errant nonsense."

Last year, Mr. Wood testified before a special grand jury that heard from 75 witnesses as part of the investigation into election interference in Georgia.

Danny Hakim reported from New York.

Abortion Rights Group Renames Itself as Mission Grows Beyond 'Pro-Choice' in the Post-Roe Era

By LISA LERER

NARAL Pro-Choice America, one of the country's largest advocacy groups for abortion rights, announced on Wednesday that it had changed its name, a switch that illustrates the issue's shifting politics after the Supreme Court overturned federal abortion rights.

For decades, abortion rights activists cast their mission as a fight over health care and women's rights. NARAL's new name — Reproductive Freedom for All — is intended to align the group's goals with a different argument: In the post-Roe era, the battle for abortion access is a fight for fundamental freedoms.

For abortion rights supporters, the term "pro-choice" — once widely used by Democrats — feels particularly dated in a country where abortion laws are now determined by individual states and jurisdictions, leaders of the group said.

"Pro-choice" does not resonate with the moderate, younger and male voters who have become more engaged since the Supreme Court ended the nationwide right to abortion last year, said Mini Timmaraju, NARAL's president. The group's old name also failed, she said, to reflect the work of Black and Hispanic women long on the front lines of the fight for abortion access.

"NARAL is incredibly resonant for the political world, but we're not necessarily in the business anymore of just winning political opinion within elected officials and policymakers," Ms. Timmaraju said. "We are now in a much bigger fight for the heart and soul of the American people and those are folks who are brand-new to the abortion debate."

Along with the new name, the group plans to increase its focus on state organizing and to adopt a broader approach, joining causes like eliminating the Senate filibuster, supporting voting rights and expanding the Supreme Court.

Supporters and opponents of abortion rights have both started to reposition themselves as the contours of the political battle rapidly change. Some Republicans have urged their party to move away from the term "pro-life," arguing that the label has become politically damaging for their candidates. Others have leaned in: A few weeks before the ruling that overturned Roe v. Wade, Susan B. Anthony List, the anti-abortion advocacy group, changed its name to Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America.

A term that now may seem dated, especially among young voters.

But NARAL's name change underscores how sharply abortion politics have shifted since the Supreme Court's decision last year in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization.

For years, surveys showed that those who oppose abortion were more energized by the issue, viewing it as a litmus test for candidates. After the ruling, the politics flipped, with those supportive of abortion rights growing more motivated by the issue, while those opposed became less so.

The abortion rights movement has shifted its message from talking about abortion as health care to casting the legality of the procedure as an American liberty. It's a message NARAL has been pushing since 2018, when an internal research project found the argument to be the most broadly persuasive.

It was a message many Democrats embraced in the 2022 midterm elections, casting abortion restrictions as a kind of government overreach. Republicans, meanwhile, used similar arguments during the pandemic and often invoked the word "freedom" to criticize mask mandates and other public health measures.

Reproductive Freedom for All is the fourth name change for the organization, which started as the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws in 1969. After Roe was decided in 1973, it became the National Abortion Rights Action League. Reproductive Rights was added to its name in 1993. Then, in 2003, the group became NARAL Pro-Choice America, a change that coincided with a multimillion-dollar effort to make abortion a central topic in the 2004 presidential election.



PETE MAROVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Speaker Kevin McCarthy said he was not ready to seek help from Democrats, an option likely to set off a challenge to his hold on power.

House Republicans Inch Closer to Spending Deal

By CARL HULSE and ANNIE KARNI

WASHINGTON — House Republicans inched closer on Wednesday to overcoming deep internal divisions and reaching an agreement that would allow them to advance stalled spending legislation, as Speaker Kevin McCarthy bowed to the demands of far-right lawmakers for steep spending cuts that stood little chance of surviving in the Senate.

The emerging deal was unlikely to bring Congress closer to averting a shutdown in 10 days, and it remained unclear whether Republicans could even reach agreement among themselves on a purely symbolic measure that underscored Mr. McCarthy's precarious hold on his job.

Mr. McCarthy emerged from a lengthy Wednesday night meeting with Republican lawmakers saying he felt optimistic that he was closer to having the votes to pass a stopgap funding measure to keep federal agencies open through October, despite a handful of hard-line Republicans who have threatened to stand in the way.

Behind closed doors, he proposed a monthlong bill that would temporarily set overall government spending at $1.47 trillion, the funding level in place before the pandemic that hard-right lawmakers have been clamoring for since January; include stringent border restrictions; and create a commission to tackle spending and debt. And he said the House would move individual spending bills that would result in overall expenditures of $1.56 trillion for the coming year, a substantial cut from the level he agreed to with President Biden as part of the debt deal reached in May.

In a sign that the House was shaking off the paralysis that has gripped it for most of the week, Mr. McCarthy said he planned to bring a Pentagon spending bill back to the floor on Thursday, two days after a handful of hard-line Republicans blocked a vote on it, dealing him an embarrassing defeat. Republicans emerging from the meeting said two of the rebels, Representative Ken Buck of Colorado and Representative Ralph Norman of South Carolina, had changed positions and would now allow a vote on the bill to proceed.

Still, even if the stopgap spending plan were to succeed, it would place the House on a collision course with the Democratic-controlled Senate, where there is bipartisan opposition to the cuts Mr. McCarthy has laid out and to the immigration restrictions. With government funding slated to lapse after Sept. 30, it left Congress still far from an agreement to avert a shutdown.

A stopgap proposal that faces fierce Senate opposition.

Nor was it entirely clear whether Mr. McCarthy could muster support for his latest gambit. At the closed door meeting on Wednesday evening, Representative Matt Gaetz, Republican of Florida, who has led the resistance to Mr. McCarthy, said he knew of at least seven Republicans who would vote against any stopgap funding measure to avert a government shutdown, no matter what the spending level. He would not say who they were.

That assertion received some pushback from other hard-right members.

Representative Patrick McHenry, a McCarthy ally from North Carolina, said it was too soon to start thinking about turning to Democrats for help and called the impasse part of the "natural give and take" of finding an overall funding figure that Republicans could agree on.

"The first go of it in the House of Representative is always within your own party," he said after the meeting. "That's what the speaker is trying to do, is build consensus among Republicans."

The speaker also said he was not ready to give up and seek help from Democrats, an option likely to set off an immediate effort by right-wing lawmakers to remove him from the speakership.

"Anytime we have an obstacle, let's not quit," Mr. McCarthy told reporters as he was pressed on how he intended to overcome the resistance from the far right. "Sometimes it takes longer than others. There were a lot of Republicans who said they would never vote for me as speaker either," he said, referring to his January fight for the speaker's gavel that took 15 House votes to decide.

But it was that battle that was coming back to haunt Mr. McCarthy, who was still working to satisfy the same band of hard-right rebels who had demanded concessions from him — including promises to rein in federal spending — in exchange for their votes to make him speaker.

While Mr. McCarthy tried to appear unflappable, smilingly shaking hands and greeting tourists in the Capitol Rotunda, his allies were growing increasingly frustrated by the opposition, accusing some on the right of "moving the goal posts" in an effort to undermine Mr. McCarthy and topple him from his post.

"It may be a situation where the personality clashes — few as they may be, but sufficient in number to make a difference — is what we are facing," said Representative Steve Womack, Republican of Arkansas and a senior member of the Appropriations Committee.

Other lawmakers close to Mr. McCarthy said the stalemate was costing House Republicans valuable leverage in the upcoming funding showdown with the Senate and the White House.

Representative Garret Graves, Republican of Louisiana, said Republicans were also putting themselves in position to take the blame for a shutdown despite their joint opposition to Biden administration policies.

"This is a disastrous administration," he said. "And you're having Republicans that are going down a path or are executing a strategy where they are going to take Joe Biden off the front page and slap their own mugs on it. It doesn't make any sense."

With the outlook uncertain, Mr. McCarthy intended to keep House members in town and voting at least through Saturday, lawmakers said, as he and his backers groped for a way out of the impasse.

The Senate on Wednesday reached a spending impasse of its own as Republicans defeated an attempt to overcome an objection by Senator Ron Johnson, Republican of Wisconsin, to considering three bipartisan spending bills in unison. Republicans were reluctant to steamroll their far-right colleagues and perhaps set a precedent in overcoming the type of objections that empower individual senators.

But senators said the outcome would allow more negotiations with Mr. Johnson, and talks were ongoing to try to find a way to satisfy him and move ahead on the legislation that had broad support from both parties.

"I'm going to stay at the table," said Senator Patty Murray, Democrat of Washington and chair of the Appropriations Committee. "I will keep working."

Kayla Guo contributed reporting.

The Five in the House Who Are Giving the Speaker Fits

By ANNIE KARNI

WASHINGTON — Speaker Kevin McCarthy's latest embarrassing setback unfolded on the House floor on Tuesday, when five rebel Republicans took the rare step of breaking with their party to block a Pentagon spending bill from coming to the floor for a vote.

The five represent just a fraction of about a dozen hard-right lawmakers who are pushing for deeper spending cuts than Mr. McCarthy has put forward in bills to fund the government over the next year, and who are opposed to a stopgap funding measure that would avert a government shutdown at the end of the month while lawmakers try to hammer out a deal.

They were also ringleaders of the resistance to Mr. McCarthy when he waged a 15-round battle to become speaker in January, and are among those who have recently threatened to oust him from the post for failing to keep promises he made to them to win the job.

Two other like-minded Republicans, Representatives Matt Gaetz of Florida and Eli Crane of Arizona, voted with their party to allow the military spending measure to come to the floor, though they have indicated they will not vote for a temporary spending measure to stave off a shutdown. They had personal and parochial reasons for backing the Pentagon measure: Mr. Crane is a former member of the Navy SEALs and Mr. Gaetz represents Pensacola, the heartbeat of naval aviation.

The five who defected drew stern rebukes on Tuesday from some fellow Republicans who accused them of holding the military hostage. Representative Jen Kiggans, a Republican from a competitive district in Virginia, called it "unacceptable and offensive behavior."

But for the small band of insurgents, the main issue driving them to freeze the House, again, was a lack of trust in Mr. McCarthy.

Here's a look at the holdouts and why they refused to fall in line.

Andy Biggs of Arizona



Mr. Biggs, the former House Freedom Caucus chairman, explained his vote in a video he posted online.

"I don't want to hold the military hostage; that's not what we're trying to do," said Mr. Biggs, a longtime McCarthy detractor who mounted his own failed bid for speaker. "We're simply saying: 'Give us all the spending the way you promised. And let us know how much we're really spending.'"

Mr. Biggs said he was a "no" because Mr. McCarthy had not followed through on his promise to present 12 individual appropriations bills totaling no more than $1.47 trillion, the government spending level before the pandemic.

That level is far below what Mr. McCarthy negotiated with President Biden as part of a deal this year to suspend the debt ceiling, and is unacceptable to members of both parties in the Senate.

"They're trying to make us look bad and put us in a corner because they haven't done their job," Mr. Biggs said of Mr. McCarthy and his team. "A number of us said, 'Look, your reputation for truthfulness is bad.'"

Dan Bishop of North Carolina



Mr. Bishop, who is running for attorney general in his state, also cited the failure to present the 12 individual appropriations bills as the explanation for his opposition, saying he had voted as he vowed he would.

He has emerged as one of the most hard-line members of "The 20," a group of right-wing Republicans who have promised to vote against any appropriations bill proposed by their party leaders until they are assured of a lower level of spending overall, which they argued Mr. McCarthy promised in January.

Ken Buck of Colorado



A member of the House Freedom Caucus, Mr. Buck often behaves like a party of one. He has criticized his party's efforts to impeach Mr. Biden, despite it being one of the top demands of the far right. He is no big fan of former President Donald J. Trump and was one of just two members of the party's right flank who voted to certify the 2020 election results.

If Mr. Buck has a clear through line this Congress, it is that he rarely expresses an opinion on any issue that strengthens Mr. McCarthy, although the speaker said on Wednesday that he had changed his position.

"Here's the problem: He said spending was his No. 1 priority when he was elected speaker, and then he didn't institute any of the things that I'm talking about," Mr. Buck recently told Politico.

He has been talking about leaving Congress.

"I am interested in talking to folks at CNN and other news organizations," he told The New York Post this week. "Having an opportunity to do that full time or do that as a contributor would be great also."

Matt Rosendale of Montana



Mr. Rosendale, who is running a populist, anti-establishment campaign for Senate, said his vote against the rule was a protest of how leaders are handling the spending bills overall.

"For months, I have made it clear that in order for me to support the appropriations bills, we need to see the total value for all 12 bills," Mr. Rosendale wrote on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter. "Leadership has yet to provide us with that number, which is why I voted against the rule this afternoon!"

Ralph Norman of South Carolina



Mr. Norman, who is considering a primary challenge against Senator Lindsey Graham, said he was opposing all Republican spending initiatives until he received a commitment from Mr. McCarthy that the House would return federal spending to prepandemic levels without any budgetary gimmicks.

"I want to have a real number," he said, but on Wednesday Mr. McCarthy said that he, too, had changed his mind.

Angry Garland Declines To Reveal Details of Case Involving President's Son

From Page A1

from outside influence. And we will not back down from defending our democracy."

It was Mr. Garland's first appearance before the committee — stocked with far-right Trump stalwarts — since Mr. Smith brought two criminal indictments against Mr. Trump and a plea deal for Hunter Biden collapsed over the summer.

Mr. Garland's testimony took place at what had been, in years past, a routine oversight hearing that would typically center on policy, crime, law enforcement initiatives and civil rights — issues that were largely jettisoned for attacks by Republicans and counterattacks by Democrats.

Republican committee members had signaled that they would grill Mr. Garland about his role in the later stages of a five-year investigation into Hunter Biden. It appeared to be nearing an end this summer until it imploded in July over the terms of the plea deal between Mr. Biden and the U.S. attorney for Delaware, David C. Weiss.

Republicans focused on a claim by a former Internal Revenue Service investigator, Gary Shapley, who said Mr. Weiss had suggested that he was being blocked from fully investigating the case of Mr. Biden's taxes by being denied the power to independently pursue charges in jurisdictions outside Delaware. (Mr. Weiss and several other investigators in the case have rejected the claim.)

On Wednesday, they homed in on one of the biggest unexplained questions: why Mr. Weiss requested to be appointed special counsel in August. Mr. Garland told a Senate committee this year that as the U.S. attorney in Delaware, Mr. Weiss had all the authority he required — and had never asked for a change in status.

"Did you ask him what had changed, that made him now need to be made a special counsel?" asked Representative Dan Bishop, Republican of North Carolina.

In response, Mr. Garland cited a promise he had made to senators during his confirmation in 2021 — that he would not interfere with the work of Mr. Weiss to avoid any appearance that he was influencing an investigation into his boss's son.

"I have kept that promise," he said. "The way to not interfere is to not investigate an investigation."

The theory that President Biden intervened to protect his son, widely trumpeted by House Republicans and amplified by conservative news media, is a prime motivator behind the impeachment inquiry begun by Speaker Kevin McCarthy under pressure from the right flank of his party.

Republicans see Mr. Garland as a critical link, even though he has taken steps to insulate himself from the case, including by reappointing Mr. Weiss, who was installed under the Trump administration. Similarly, officials say, Mr. Garland has virtually cut off communications with the White House since the department began investigating Mr. Trump.

"As the president himself has said, and I reaffirm here today: I am not the president's lawyer," he said in his opening statement.

Over the past week, Representative Jim Jordan, Republican of Ohio and the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, has increased the pace and scope of his demand for access to documents and officials, including Mr. Weiss and his deputies, claiming they are fundamentally necessary for his committee to fulfill its oversight function.

The department has thus far refused to comply, citing laws and regulations that prevent it from disclosing details of open investigations, prompting Thomas Massie, Republican of Kentucky, to suggest Mr. Garland be held in contempt of Congress.

In response, Representative Eric Swalwell, Democrat of California, pointed out that Mr. Jordan, a close ally of Mr. Trump, was one of four Republicans to defy subpoenas issued by the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 attacks when Democrats were in charge.

Republicans have peppered Mr. Garland with a wide range of questions during his other recent appearances, but on Wednesday they mostly focused on the Hunter Biden inquiry.

Still, several times Mr. Garland was asked about his role in the two federal indictments of Mr. Trump — and whether he had personally approved it at the request of President Biden, as Mr. Trump has claimed without providing evidence.

"No one has told me to indict," he said. "And in this case, the decision to indict was made by the special counsel."

Mr. Garland, who spent a week preparing for the onslaught he faced, selected his words cautiously, refusing to offer much beyond what is already in the public record.

His simmering frustration boiled over during one extraordinary exchange after Representative Jeff Van Drew, a New Jersey Republican, said that the department had discriminated against Catholics after an F.B.I. official drafted a memo — already disavowed by Mr. Garland — that flagged a religious group as a potential threat.

The attorney general denounces threats against prosecutors.

"The idea that someone with my family background would discriminate against any religion is so outrageous — absurd!" shouted Mr. Garland, whose Jewish family fled antisemitism in Europe and the Holocaust.

Mr. Jordan repeatedly accused the Justice Department of slow-walking potential felony tax charges into Hunter Biden because the statute of limitations has since expired. But the F.B.I. continues to investigate the president's son, including whether he violated the Foreign Agents Registration Act, commonly known as FARA, in his business dealings abroad.

The hearing was as much an exercise in political combat as an exchange of information. Mr. Jordan, speaking in a shout for most of the hearing, established the tenor by declaring in his opening statement that "the fix is in!"

Representative Jerrold Nadler of New York, the top Democrat on the committee, shot back, saying "extreme MAGA Republicans have poisoned our vital oversight work" in an effort to distract from the multiple indictments of Mr. Trump.

Mr. Garland, whose voice was reduced to a ragged whisper after hours of constant back and forth, enjoyed only brief moments of respite when Republicans and Democrats on the committee turned their attention on one another.

When Matt Gaetz, the bellicose Republican congressman from Florida, began a blistering attack on the attorney general, Representative Steve Cohen, Democrat of Tennessee, raised the Justice Department's sex-trafficking investigation into Mr. Gaetz that, ultimately, resulted in no charges.

"Wasn't there an investigation of Mr. Gaetz, and you did not prosecute him?" asked Mr. Cohen, suggesting that the decision to not bring charges proved the department's impartiality.

"The department does not make comments about its investigations," Mr. Garland said.

Charlie Savage, Adam Goldman and Luke Broadwater contributed reporting.



PETE MAROVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

"We will not be intimidated," Attorney General Merrick B. Garland said. "We will do our jobs free from outside influence."

Senate Skirts Blockade by Confirming Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff

By KAROUN DEMIRJIAN and KAYLA GUO

WASHINGTON — The Senate voted on Wednesday to confirm Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr. of the Air Force as the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, steering around a monthslong blockade of military promotions by Senator Tommy Tuberville, Republican of Alabama, who has held up hundreds of nominees in protest of a Pentagon abortion access policy.

General Brown, whom the Senate confirmed by a vote of 83 to 11, was one of three high-profile military promotions that Senator Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York and the majority leader, called up on the floor Wednesday, in an effort to force votes to confirm their bids to serve on the president's top military advisory council. The Senate is expected on Thursday to confirm Gen. Eric Smith of the Marine Corps and Gen. Randy George of the Army as the chiefs of staff for their respective services as well.

General Brown, now confirmed, is set to succeed Army Gen. Mark A. Milley as the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs when he steps down at the end of the month.

But while the move resolved the standoff over some of the military's highest-profile promotions, it left hundreds more in limbo, still stymied by Mr. Tuberville's objections.

Mr. Schumer had been reluctant to force votes on individual nominees for fear of being seen as capitulating to Mr. Tuberville, whose tactics he has likened to hostage taking. The Alabama senator has been blocking a series of promotions of senior generals and admirals in an effort to force the Pentagon to reverse a policy, conceived after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, of giving time off and reimbursing service members who were required to travel to obtain abortion or fertility services.

"The Senate will overwhelmingly vote to confirm them, and these three honorable men will finally be able to assume their positions," Mr. Schumer said on the Senate floor. "And the abortion policy that Senator Tuberville abhors will remain in place. Senator Tuberville will have accomplished nothing."

While Mr. Tuberville said he welcomed their quick approvals, he added he would not relent in his push to do away with the abortion access policy.

"They finally figured out I wasn't going to give in. I'm still not," Mr. Tuberville told reporters on Wednesday. "They've got to do the right thing and move the policy back."

Tuberville says he will still stall promotions over abortion policy.

The White House praised the action but criticized Mr. Tuberville for refusing to back down.

Mr. Schumer's move, said John F. Kirby, a White House spokesman, was good for the three generals, their military branches and the Defense Department overall, but it "doesn't fix the problem or provide a path forward for the 316 other general and flag officers that are held up by this ridiculous hold."

In March, the Pentagon enacted a policy providing time off and travel reimbursement to service members needing to go out of state to obtain an abortion or other forms of reproductive health services, in an effort to give troops equal access to such care regardless of where they are stationed.Mr. Tuberville, who had warned earlier that he would protest the policy change if it were enacted, has dug in since, refusing to allow nominations to advance even when leaders of his own party publicly disavowed his efforts as dangerous for military readiness. Instead, he has demanded repeatedly that the Pentagon revoke its policy unless Congress passes a law explicitly codifying it, and he dared Mr. Schumer to use cumbersome procedural maneuvers if he wants to get around his objections.

Before Mr. Tuberville's protest, the Senate regularly approved senior military promotions in large blocks without controversy, a practice established to save precious floor hours. While Mr. Schumer has had the power to force votes on each individual promotion, he has resisted because doing so for the hundreds that are pending would have consumed the Senate's attention for weeks. He also feared it might encourage other senators to employ similar tactics to protest federal policies in the future.

Mr. Schumer changed his mind on Wednesday after Mr. Tuberville threatened to go around his own blockade and demand that the Senate hold a vote on the nomination of General Smith, the first of the three newly confirmed chiefs to have appeared for a hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee. That would have allowed Mr. Tuberville to blunt accusations that he has put national security at risk by leaving the top ranks of the military without permanent, fully empowered leaders.

Mr. Schumer ridiculed Mr. Tuberville's latest gambit on the floor Wednesday, accusing the Alabama senator of being underhanded and "essentially trying to make himself the gatekeeper of which officers are promoted and who sits and waits."

Mr. Tuberville accused Mr. Schumer in turn of having mismanaged the situation and of underestimating his resolve. "This hold is not affecting readiness," Mr. Tuberville said. "If Democrats want to complain, they should look in the mirror. I don't control the floor; the Democrats do."

It was not immediately clear whether Mr. Schumer would attempt to continue holding such votes on pending high-profile military promotions. The Armed Services Committee is expected to recommend Admiral Lisa M. Franchetti to the full Senate for confirmation as the next chief of naval operations soon, and in the coming weeks, the panel is expected to consider the nomination of Gen. David Allvin to serve as the Air Force's new chief of staff.

Mr. Kirby noted that doing so for every pending promotion could take as much as 700 hours, adding, "That's not only unrealistic; it's dangerous for our national security."

Erica L. Green contributed reporting.

Rabbis Who Started Fire at Nursing Home Are Spared Jail Time



PHOTOGRAPHS BY GREGG VIGLIOTTI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Calvin Lloyd, center, whose son Jared Lloyd was killed in a 2021 fire at Evergreen Court Home for Adults in Spring Valley, N.Y.

By ERIN NOLAN and ED SHANAHAN

NEW CITY, N.Y. — Tensions ran high in a Rockland County, N.Y., courtroom on Wednesday as two rabbis who have admitted to recklessly starting a deadly fire at an assisted living home were spared jail time under a plea agreement with prosecutors.

The rabbis, Nathaniel Sommer, 71, and his son Aaron, 29, were sentenced instead to probation after pleading guilty in connection with the March 2021 fire at the Evergreen Court Home for Adults in Spring Valley, N.Y., which they set off during a ritual cleansing of the home's kitchen and ovens before Passover.



Left to right, Nathaniel and Aaron Sommer in Rockland County Court on Wednesday.

The fast-moving blaze killed Oliver Hueston, 79, one of the home's 112 residents, and Jared Lloyd, 35, a volunteer firefighter who ran into the building and died attempting a rescue on the third floor. About a dozen others were injured.

In an emotional statement delivered in court, Mr. Lloyd's mother, Sabrail Davenport, expressed outrage about the sentence.

"How does the negligent act of these offenses warrant no jail time?" Ms. Davenport asked Judge Kevin Russo of Rockland County Court, who described the sentence as "entirely appropriate."

"How do you explain to my grandsons that these defendants who caused this tragedy will not be punished?" Ms. Davenport added.

Addressing the Sommers, Mr. Lloyd's father, Calvin Lloyd, criticized "the decision you made as a father and son, not realizing the impact it would have on this father and son."

He added: "Each and every day I struggle to get through the day, knowing that I will never be able to talk to my son again."

The decision by the county's district attorney, Thomas E. Walsh, not to seek jail time for the Sommers has prompted a backlash among Mr. Lloyd's fellow firefighters, who packed the courtroom and the lawn outside for the sentencing.

In a videotaped statement, Mr. Walsh, who is seeking re-election to a second term and had previously declined to address the plea agreement publicly, sought to explain his decision.

Acknowledging that Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Hueston were "irreplaceable," he said the case was the first of its kind in New York.

"No one has been convicted, let alone arrested and prosecuted, for utilizing a torch and hot coals for a ritual religious cleaning in the manner the defendants chose that evening," Mr. Walsh said.

By choosing to resolve the charges before trial, he said, his office had "eliminated the unpredictability that accompanies" going before a jury and had only done so on the condition that at least one of the Sommers acknowledged their recklessness in open court.

Nathaniel Sommer did that in pleading guilty to two counts of manslaughter in June, Mr. Walsh said. On Wednesday, Mr. Sommer expressed remorse.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I feel terrible about what I did," adding, "I pray every day about this."

The sentencing came two days after firefighters and relatives gathered at Mr. Lloyd's firehouse and his young sons, Darius and Logan, unveiled a plaque honoring him, the local news site Lohud reported.

It was the latest in a series of tributes to Mr. Lloyd that included a Medal of Valor ceremony at the White House in July. His mother and sons accepted the honor, given to public safety officers who display "exceptional courage," from President Biden.

Mr. Lloyd, a 16-year veteran of Columbian Fire Engine Co. No. 1 of Spring Valley, was among the first of more than 100 firefighters to respond to the Evergreen Court blaze when it broke out at around 1 a.m. on March 23, 2021.

The fatal blaze began with a pre-Passover ritual cleansing.

Hours earlier, the Sommers had used an industrial blowtorch to cleanse the home's ovens and kitchen for Passover in a ritual they had performed at Evergreen Court for at least a decade — one the authorities said they did not have a permit for.

The ritual caused "smoldering" inside the building's walls that lasted several hours before the fire was detected, Michael Dugandzic, a prosecutor, said in court.

Flames were tearing through the building and shooting up to the roof when firefighters arrived. Mr. Lloyd rushed in repeatedly to help residents who had walkers or wheelchairs.

He was near Mr. Hueston's room when he made an emergency "mayday" call. Part of the building collapsed, burying him in rubble.

The Sommers were among six people charged in the case, and their pleas resulted in the only convictions. Mr. Walsh's office ended the prosecution of two others, both former Evergreen Court employees, in exchange for their testimony to a grand jury. The final two, local building inspectors, were acquitted at trial of charges that they had falsified documents.

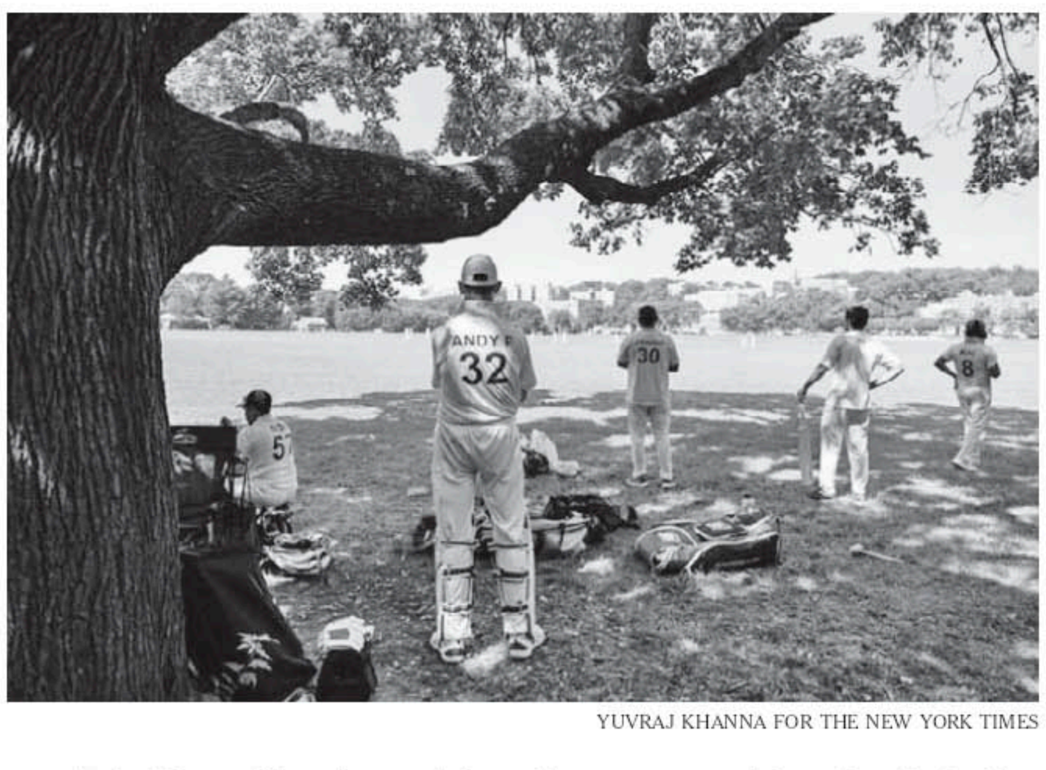
The estates of Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Hueston have sued Evergreen Court's operators and those who were charged.

Mr. Walsh said the suits, in their early stages, would benefit from the Sommers' guilty pleas.

That was little comfort to Mr. Hueston's son David, who said in a statement read by a prosecutor that his daughter would never get to meet her grandfather.

"I think people should also be forgiven once they admit guilt to a crime," Mr. Hueston said. "But I do not think the sentence goes far enough to make them understand the consequences."

New York City Loses a Contentious Bid For a Cricket Stadium to Long Island



YUVRAJ KHANNA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A temporary stadium had been proposed for Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx.

By DANA RUBINSTEIN

A contentious plan backed by Mayor Eric Adams for the International Cricket Council to build a temporary, 34,000-seat stadium in a Bronx park is dead, following heated opposition from local elected officials and some amateur cricket players.

The stadium was to host part of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup next June. The venue will instead be built in Eisenhower Park in Nassau County on Long Island.

The decision represents a defeat for Mr. Adams, who has made lifting New York City's sports economy key to his economic agenda and backed the bid, even hosting a rally in City Hall in support of the proposal.

The news was confirmed by an Adams administration official and in a draft news release reviewed by The New York Times. It was announced publicly by the International Cricket Council Wednesday morning.

"New York City put forward a competitive bid reflective of the diversity of our city and the countless immigrant communities who call it home, and we appreciate their support," Amaris Cockfield, a spokeswoman for Mr. Adams, said in a statement congratulating Nassau County for its selection.

Ms. Cockfield said that City Hall looked forward to welcoming tournament attendees at the hotels, restaurants and "other attractions that make New York City the best destination for major events."

In March, the International Cricket Council, a global governing body for the sport, approached the mayor's office about its plan to build a modular cricket stadium in Van Cortlandt Park atop the city's largest expanse of cricket pitches, according to a timeline provided by both the city and the Cricket Council. The stadium was to have the seating capacity of Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox.

The proposal quickly won the support of the mayor. It also angered users of Van Cortlandt Park and divided the cricket-playing community.

Though the plan called for construction to begin in early 2024, details about the actual bid remained scant. What became clear was that the Cricket Council would need the park for an estimated six months, and some critics feared even longer.

"I am thrilled that our coalition of elected and community leaders was successful in protecting Van Cortlandt Park," Councilman Eric Dinowitz, who represents the area, said Wednesday. "With no community input, a private organization would have removed access to our public park for months on end while inflicting untold damage on our park."

The administration claimed the multiday event could lead to $150 million in economic activity for New York City and create thousands of jobs. Parks advocates bristled at turning over public land to a private entity for months on end and warned of possible legal repercussions.

"Parkland in New York City is meant to be free and accessible for all," said Adam Ganser, executive director of New Yorkers for Parks. "As a paid private venue, occupying parkland for nearly a year, this proposal was unprecedented and problematic out of the gate."

Cricket players were divided. Some hailed the idea, while others recoiled at the notion of a modular stadium taking over the cricket pitches in the middle of the season.

A prominent environmental lawyer argued that the city's plan amounted to an illegal taking of public land for private purposes, and to render it legal would require state legislative action.

It was an argument embraced by local elected officials, including Representative Ritchie Torres.

"Van Cortlandt Park does not belong to those in political power, it belongs to the people," Mr. Torres said this month. "If the city government wishes to remove Van Cortlandt Park from the public trust, it must go to the state legislature."

Roughly 60 days ago, the Cricket Council reached out to the Nassau County executive, Bruce Blakeman, to see if he might be interested in hosting the event.

"I said 'Of course,'" Mr. Blakeman said in an interview on Tuesday. "We're used to doing big events here in Nassau County. We've got a lot of cricket fans."

Corrections

FRONT PAGE

An article on Tuesday about Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's second visit to the United States described imprecisely Russia's comments about NATO in the run-up to the invasion. It demanded that NATO agree not to expand eastward and guarantee not to station weapons in several eastern member countries, not that those members leave the alliance.

BUSINESS

An article on Wednesday about a new online safety law in Britain misstated the fine companies can face for violating Britain's online safety law. It is 18 million pounds, or about $22.3 million, or up to 10 percent of global revenue, whichever is more, not 18 million pounds.

ARTS

Because of an editing error, a Critic's Notebook article on Tuesday about the return of talk shows amid strikes in Hollywood contained outdated information about two daytime talk shows. "The Jennifer Hudson Show" and "The Talk" announced on Sept. 17 that they were delaying their returns to the air; they were no longer planning to return over the protests of the striking writers' guild members.

SPORTS

A picture caption with an article by The Athletic on Wednesday about the Baltimore Orioles clinching an American League playoff berth misstated the given name of the team's general manager. He is Mike Elias, not Mark.

Errors are corrected during the press run whenever possible, so some errors noted here may not have appeared in all editions.

Contact the Newsroom

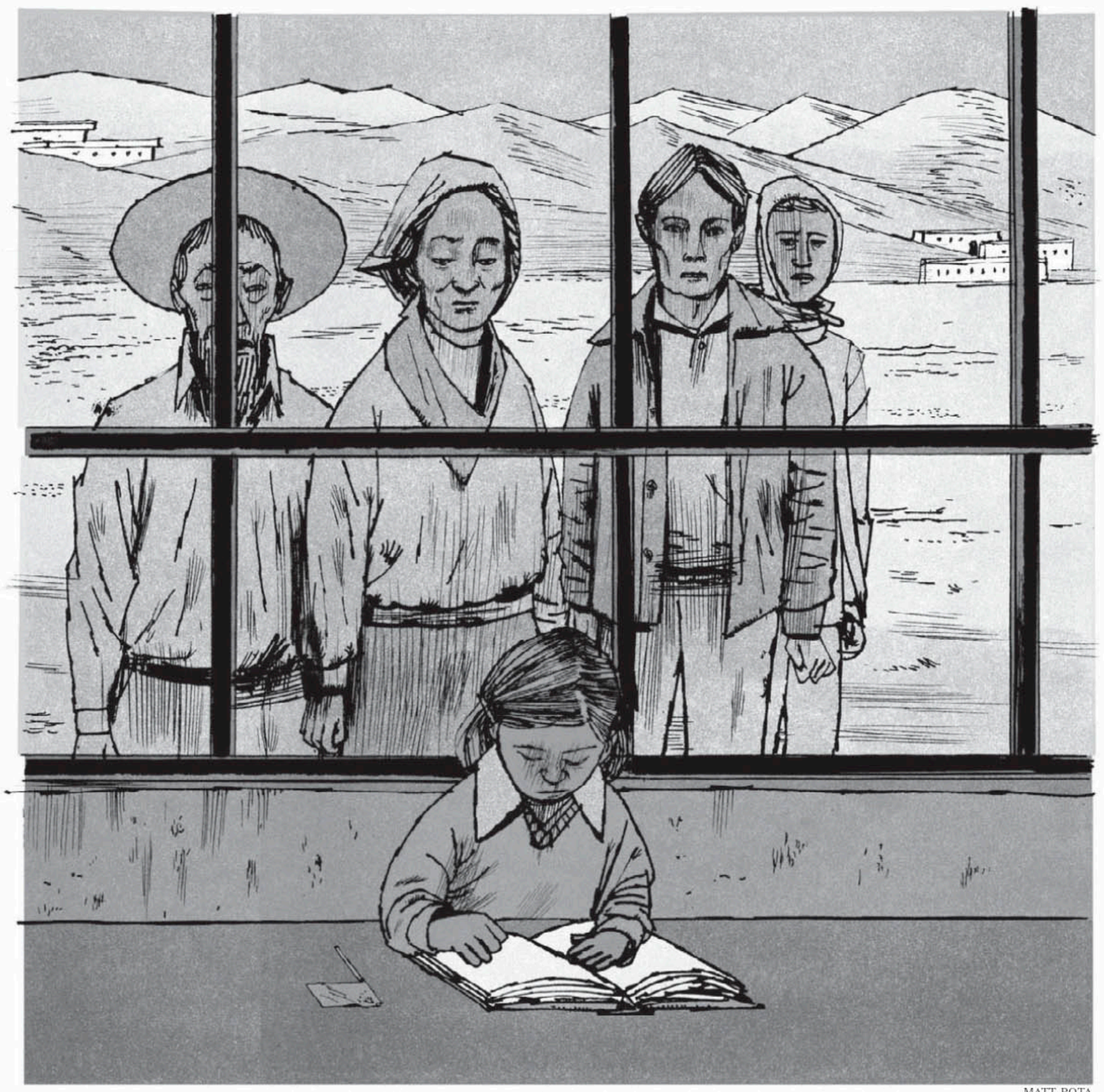
To contact the newsroom regarding correction requests, please email corrections@nytimes.com.

Opinion

The New York Times

One Million Tibetan Children, Indoctrinated by China

Gyal Lo
An educational sociologist and a Tibetan activist based in Canada.



MATT ROTA

ONE day in late November 2016, back home in Tibet, I received a distressing call from my brother telling me I needed to check on his granddaughters. "Something very strange is happening," he said.

My young relatives, who were 4 and 5 years old at the time, had just enrolled in a boarding preschool that the Chinese government had established in my hometown, Kanlho, a seminomadic region in the northeast corner of the Tibetan plateau. Their new school was one of many — I have personally tracked about 160 in three Tibetan prefectures alone — and part of Beijing's growing network of preschools in which Tibetan children are separated from their families and communities and assimilated into Chinese culture.

Though it had only been three months since the girls had started at the school, my brother said, they were beginning to distance themselves from their Tibetan identity. On weekends, when they could return from school to their family, they rejected the food at home. They became less interested in our Buddhist traditions and spoke Tibetan less often. Most alarming, they were growing emotionally estranged from our family. "I might lose them if something isn't done," my brother worried.

Concerned, I set out to the girls' school a few days later to pick them up for the weekend. When they walked out of the gates, they waved to me but barely spoke. When we arrived home, the girls didn't hug their parents. They spoke only Mandarin to each other and remained silent during our family dinner. They had become strangers in their own home.

When I asked the girls about school, the older one recounted how on the first day several children, anxious from being unable to communicate with teachers who only spoke Mandarin, urinated and defecated in their pants.

As the Chinese government continues its 70-year quest to build legitimacy and control over Tibet, it is pivoting increasingly to using education as a battlefield to gain political control. By separating children from their families and familiar surroundings and funneling them into residential schools where they can become assimilated into Chinese subjects, the state is betting on a future where younger generations of Tibetans will become groomed Chinese Communist Party loyalists, model subjects easy to control and manipulate.

Today these boarding schools house roughly one million children between ages 4 and 18, approximately 80 percent of that population. At least 100,000 of those children — and I believe there are many more — are only 4 or 5 years old, as my young relatives were.

After listening to the girls' stories, I asked my brother what would happen if he just refused to send them. He teared up. Disobeying the new policy would mean having his name blacklisted from government benefits. Others who have protested the new schools have suffered terrible consequences, he said.

A vast network of government boarding schools separates families and threatens a way of life.

He also didn't have any other choice. Though Chinese boarding schools for Tibetan children have been around since the early 1980s, until recently they had mostly enrolled middle and high school students. But around 2010, the government, in preparation for the new wave of residential preschools, began shutting down local village schools, including the one in our hometown. Then it made preschool a prerequisite for elementary school. Though many of the new boarding schools are far from children's hometowns, refusing to enroll in them would mean children would grow up with little to no education and become further marginalized from an economy that many Tibetans are already excluded from.

Distressed by the changes I observed in my family, I set out over the next few years to visit more than 50 boarding preschools across northern and eastern Tibet, areas that China calls the Qinghai, Sichuan and Gansu Provinces. Over the course of my three years of fieldwork and meetings with students, parents and teachers, what I discovered was worse than anything I could have imagined.

I met young Tibetan children who could no longer speak their native tongue. The schools strictly controlled parental visits. In some cases, schoolchildren saw their families only once every six months. Dormitories, playgrounds and teachers' offices were heavily surveilled. I saw security cameras installed in classrooms, no doubt to make sure teachers — many of whom were young Chinese undergraduates with little to no background in Tibetan language and culture — only used C.C.P.-approved textbooks.

In one school I visited in the nomadic town of Zorge, a homesick child, in a very quiet tone, said: "When it gets dark in the evening and I can't take care of myself, I miss my mom and grandparents."

A woman in my village whose small children had been sent to a boarding school told me: "Whenever I came home exhausted after working all day on the farm, I wanted to hug my 4- and 5-year-old kids. But they were not there." To heal the pain of their separation, she and a group of other young mothers from her village organized a walking pilgrimage of 1,200 kilometers, or about 745 miles, to Lhasa.

One villager told me: "We realize that the government is not ours. When officials come to our town, they don't know our language or how to communicate with us."

Another asked: "How can our language and culture survive if we are not able to stop what is happening?"

Beijing's use of schools to erase Tibetan culture isn't new. During the Cultural Revolution, the government banned the teaching of Tibetan in many schools. Then, in 1985, in addition to the boarding schools that had been set up inside Tibet, Beijing pioneered its Inland Schooling Program, which sent Tibetan students off to boarding schools across China. James Leibold, an expert in Chinese ethnic policies, described the schools as "a military-style boot camp in how to be 'Chinese' and how to conform to acceptable ways of acting, thinking and being." By 2005, 29,000 Tibetan students had attended these schools.

The trend has only accelerated — and reached younger and younger children. In March 2018, at an annual Parliament meeting, President Xi Jinping said that "core socialist values should set the tone of the common spiritual home of all ethnic groups" and "should be nurtured among the people, particularly children and even in kindergartens."

Beijing's focus on separating younger Tibetans from their culture has finally caught Washington's attention. Last month, the U.S. secretary of state, Antony Blinken, announced that the United States would impose visa restrictions on Chinese officials who are involved in "the coercion of Tibetan children into government-run boarding schools." As other countries like Canada and Australia reckon with their own history of colonial boarding schools, I hope they follow in Secretary Blinken's footsteps and intervene as China enthusiastically replicates these horrors in my homeland.

I can only hope that the international attention will force Beijing to rethink its policy and alter the fates of children like my young relatives. After years of fieldwork, I am deeply concerned for the fate of Tibetan culture: that it will slowly disappear as more and more children are forced to become Chinese, and the Tibetan culture that I know and cherish will not survive for future generations. Or else I worry that they will grow up as perpetual strangers in their own homes, in their own homeland.

Maybe Matt Gaetz Is Right

Michelle Cottle
A domestic correspondent in Opinion and a host of "Matter of Opinion."

THE dysfunctional dance taking place in the House between Speaker Kevin McCarthy and his right flank has driven me to consider something I never imagined possible: that Matt Gaetz is right.

A House speaker can be successful only with the confidence of the members who put him or her in charge, when he or she can follow through on promises made and concessions extracted. There may be no job in American government that calls for crackerjack deal-making skills more than that of speaker: so many egos, alliances and grievances to manage to keep things moving.

Mr. McCarthy, in his desperate pursuit of the speakership last winter, ran around making promises willy-nilly to the House's small band of right-wingers, and he will now rise and fall on how he handles those commitments and expectations. So far, things are not looking good for Kev — and, by extension, for a functional Congress.

Miffed at the speaker's handling of the spending fight, the right's hard-liners have been threatening to oust him, shut down the government or both. His attempt to placate them by announcing an impeachment investigation into President Biden went over poorly, prompting multiple Freedom Caucusers to scold him for trying to buy them off. Mr. Gaetz, the Florida congressman and frontman for the rebels who temporarily blocked Mr. McCarthy's speakership in January, dismissed the move as a disingenuous "baby step," accused him of being "out of compliance" with his commitments to hard-liners and threatened to force daily votes to vacate the chair — that is, to depose him. All of which apparently sent Mr. McCarthy into a profanity laced tirade at a closed-door conference meeting last Thursday that, according to multiple attendees, boiled down to (and here I've tidied it up to be family friendly): If you want to file a motion to vacate, file the flipping motion!

The speaker is clearly fed up with being bullied by his radicals. But here's the thing. Gaetz & Company have a point: Mr. McCarthy *is* out of compliance with several of his promises — or at least several they claim he made. (That's the problem with secret backroom deals.) So if the rabble-rousers want to be taken seriously going forward, they need to stop all the chest-thumping. It's time to step up and file the flipping motion.

The extremists are easy to denounce, especially with their tendency to act out like unruly teens — or Lauren Boebert at "Beetlejuice." But they are not to blame for the chaos consuming the House. It is Mr. McCarthy who led them to believe he would champion their policies and priorities. And it is Mr. McCarthy who elevated their influence in the conference, empowering them to wreak even greater havoc. *Of course* they are going to make more and more outrageous demands. That's what they do.

Some of what Mr. McCarthy committed to was beyond his power to deliver. Take the ongoing showdown over government funding. He pledged to try to cap discretionary spending at 2022 levels or lower. But with the Democrats in control of the Senate and the White House, that is a non-starter. Worse, Mr. McCarthy effectively gave the hard-liners license to play chicken with the debt ceiling. Small wonder they were brassed off when he cut a debt deal with the Democrats in May.

Maybe the key word for Mr. McCarthy in these promises was "try." Maybe he figured that, as long as he let the rebels take their best shot, they would cut him slack even if they failed to carry the day. If so, their outraged, burn-it-all-down reaction to the debt agreement should have disabused everyone of that notion. At that point, Mr. McCarthy really should have started adjusting his strategy — and the hard-liners' expectations — accordingly. Instead, he doubled down on coddling them, encouraging them to plow ahead with fantasy spending cuts. The latest proposal for a stopgap bill to keep the government running through October, which the chamber's G.O.P. leadership put forward on Sunday, was being savaged by around a dozen House Republicans on Monday, dimming its prospects for passage.

Other McCarthy promises involved bits of partisan theater. Mr. Gaetz says the rebels were guaranteed a vote on term limits, something Mr. McCarthy presumably could have arranged time for in the past eight months. But he didn't. Because he doesn't give a fig about the radicals' priorities. He just aims to keep them calm enough for him to keep his gavel.



DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Kevin McCarthy made promises to the extremists. Now they've come to collect.

Am I rooting for the hard-liners to get their way on policy matters such as . . . well, anything? Good Lord, no. Their revanchist vision for America is not one that I — or a majority of voters for that matter — share. But I get their frustration and anger. Mr. McCarthy created and unleashed this right-wing monster to serve his own ambitions. And yet somehow he seems flummoxed that it is now smashing up things and demanding its due.

Of course, there are practical reasons Gaetz et al. might opt not to boot the speaker. For all their bluster, he may be the best they can hope for. He won't get them everything they want, but he is willing to be their dancing monkey in plenty of situations. At the same time, he gives the conference enough of a sheen of establishment respectability to retain the support of its nonwingers and to not terrify more moderate voters. Arguably few other House Republicans could or would toe this degrading line.

This speaker is often said to have made a deal with the devil. But the conference's hard-liners have made one with a cynical, inconstant opportunist. They clearly suspect their slippery chief never intended to deliver on a whole host of stuff they care about, just as they know deep down that an individual so hollow is fundamentally untrustworthy. But until someone is willing to break this stalemate, we are all stuck with their twisted, codependent relationship.

COLUMNIST | CHARLES M. BLOW

Young Voters Are Frustrated, but Engaged

A PEW RESEARCH CENTER report released this week called Americans' views of our politics "dismal."

That might be too kind a word.

On metric after metric, the report ticked through markers of our persistent pessimism. In 1994, it says, "just 6 percent" of Americans viewed both political parties negatively. That number has now more than quadrupled, to 28 percent. The percentage who believe our political system is working "extremely or very well" — just 4 percent.

And on many measures, younger people are the most frustrated, and supportive of disruptive change as a remedy.

Younger voters recognize that our political system is broken, and they have little nostalgia about a less broken time. They have almost no memory of an era when government was less partisan and less gridlocked. Their instincts are to fix the system they've inherited, not to wind back the clock to a yesteryear.

According to Pew, among American adults under 30, 70 percent favor having a national popular vote for president, 58 percent favor expansion of the Supreme Court, 44 percent favor expansion of the House of Representatives, and 45 percent favor amending the Constitution to change the way representation in the Senate is apportioned — numbers higher than their older counterparts, particularly those over 50.

But the American political system wasn't built to make radical change easy. Yes, our political system needs a major overhaul, but such an overhaul is almost inconceivable given current political constraints.

This can be a bracing reality when youthful idealism crashes into it.

The knot that the country finds itself in may be one reason Pew found that younger voters are the least likely to believe that voting can have at least some effect on the country's future direction.

And yet, according to a poll this spring of 18- to 29-year-olds by the Institute of Politics at Harvard Kennedy School, they're still engaged. As John Della Volpe, the director of polling at the institute and the author of "Fight: How Gen Z is Channeling Their Fear and Passion to Save America," put it, "From the midterms through the recent Wisconsin Supreme Court election, we are seeing young Americans increasingly motivated to engage in politics out of sheer self-defense and a responsibility to fight for those even more vulnerable than themselves."

This defensive posture is understandable when you think about the political era in which these younger voters came of age: a dizzying period of dysfunction, calamity and activism.

Among voters 30 to 49, the oldest were in their 20s on Sept. 11, 2001. The events of that day would roll into America's longest war — 20 years in Afghanistan. Those voters would see the hopefulness around the election of Barack Obama as president, but also the extreme backlash to his election that would culminate in the election of Donald Trump, Obama's intellectual and moral antithesis.

Voters 18 to 29 ranged from their preteen years to their early 20s when Trump was elected in 2016. Only the oldest of them were eligible to vote at the time. The Trump years saw a president who has been accused of sexual assault, was openly hostile to minorities and disdainful of civil rights protests, and lied incessantly as those supporting him repeatedly excused or covered for him.



MADELEINE HORDINSKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

It's sad that our political system starves people of hope and optimism.

The oldest of this group were in their late teens when Trayvon Martin was killed in 2012, so they lived the birth and rise of Black Lives Matter and are now living the backlash to it.

The Trump years exposed the inability — the ineptitude — of our system to hold leaders accountable and ended with an attempt to overturn an election and a storming of the Capitol.

Those years also saw a surge in mass shootings and warnings about the effects of climate change growing more dire, two issues that have become important to young voters. The overturning of Roe v. Wade was the clincher.

It's no wonder that younger voters are so frustrated and so thirsty for change, and they spare no one in pursuing it.

While younger voters are more likely to have a favorable view of Democrats than of Republicans, they're also more likely than older generations to have unfavorable views of both parties. More than half of Americans under 30 said it is usually the case that none of candidates running for political office in recent years represent their views well.

This all hints at a profound frustration with a lack of results, the professionalization of politics, and incrementalism and intransigence.

And yet this frustrated army of voters could still have a major impact in 2024. The Brookings Institution did the math on how important this voting bloc will be:

> According to our projections, based on U.S. Census Bureau estimates, if Americans under 45 (plurals and millennials) vote at the same rate as they did in the 2020 presidential election, they will represent more than one-third (37 percent) of the 2024 electorate. If that generational cohort's contribution to the electorate in next year's presidential general election is the same as its contribution to the U.S. voting age population, it will comprise nearly half (49 percent) of the vote on Nov. 5, 2024.

In recent elections, younger voters have been voting nearly two to one for Democrats. And the Republican Party may be pushing more of that group in that direction as the party digs in its heels on social positions unpopular with them.

But it's a sad state of affairs that our current political system starves young people of hope and optimism, and instead forces them to cast their ballots as if under existential threat, regardless of which party benefits.

COLUMNIST | NICHOLAS KRISTOF

Will Republicans Abandon This Medical Triumph?

TWENTY YEARS AGO, the Republican Party started what may have been the most lifesaving government initiative in modern history. It turned the tide of AIDS around the world and has saved 25 million lives so far — equivalent to the entire population of Australia.

So it's a reflection of the madness that has infected the Republican Party that today some conservatives are repudiating perhaps the best thing they ever did, battling the reauthorization of this program.

PEPFAR, which stands for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, has a legislative authorization that expires at the end of this month. And Republicans are now fighting that reauthorization.

Republicans should be extraordinarily proud of their boldness in crafting PEPFAR, which provides antiretroviral medicines to AIDS patients and operates in more than 50 countries.

The devastation of AIDS in the 1990s and 2000s, particularly in southern Africa, may be difficult for people today to understand. Intimacy became lethal. Estimates circulated that AIDS would kill 100 million people over the next 20 years.

PEPFAR changed all that. It brought AIDS under control and gave countries their futures back.

The assault on PEPFAR accelerated in May with a report by the conservative Heritage Foundation warning without evidence that the Biden administration was using the program to promote a "radical social agenda" — including liberalized abortions.

Conservative critics, seeing a crusade forming, rushed to join. They noted that some PEPFAR dollars have gone to nonprofits that also, using separate resources, support abortions. That's true. But longstanding American policy ensures that the accounts are separate and the U.S. dollars don't pay for abortions. There's nothing new here, and it's particularly galling that Republicans preen as "pro-life" for attacking a program that saves lives on a scale like nothing before or since.

Unfortunately, some conservative organizations have said that in their political scorecards rating members of Congress they will count a vote to reauthorize PEPFAR in its present form as a vote for abortion rights. That makes it toxic for many Republican members of Congress who fear that they might no longer have a perfect "pro-life" record.

The Heritage Foundation critique also argued that AIDS is primarily a "lifestyle disease" and so "should be suppressed through education, moral suasion and legal sanctions" rather than medication. That phrase reeks of sanctimony. During the worst of the epidemic, I met Zambian women whose husbands were away working as miners; the women were terrified that when their husbands, whom they loved, came home on vacations, they would have to sleep with them — and risk death if their husbands had strayed.

PEPFAR has saved 25 million lives, but now its future is in doubt.

The most dangerous thing a woman there could do, it was said then, was to get married. If American conservatives want to fight AIDS with finger wagging instead of antiretrovirals, those women will again be at great risk.

This crisis over reauthorization has to do with the fever that has beset elements of the G.O.P., leaving some senators and House members inhabiting what seems to be delirium. A P.R.R.I. poll in 2021 found that 23 percent of Republicans agree that "The government, media and financial worlds in the U.S. are controlled by a group of Satan-worshiping pedophiles who run a global child sex-trafficking operation." Even now, some two-thirds of Republicans believe that President Biden was not legitimately elected. Only 40 percent of Republicans say that the benefits of Covid vaccines outweigh the risks (which is why research suggests that Covid may have disproportionately killed Republicans).

Republican critics say that they're still for PEPFAR in principle, but only if there are changes or a shorter reauthorization period, which would undermine confidence in the program — think of it as death by 1,000 cuts. If PEPFAR is not reauthorized by its expiry at the end of this month, it would still continue if Congress separately appropriates further funding for it, but in hobbled form.

The denunciations of PEPFAR horrify the Republican Party's grown-ups, who recognize how important the program has been.

"This is America at its best," Condoleezza Rice, President George W. Bush's national security adviser and secretary of state, told me.

"Let's not throw away one of the really great moments when the United States took on this extraordinary challenge of people who were dying from this pandemic and intervened and started to save lives," Rice said. "I just don't understand why we wouldn't want to continue to do that."

PEPFAR is one reason polls show that Africa is one of the most pro-American parts of the globe. China is competing for hearts and minds there, and America's struggle to reauthorize PEPFAR amounts to a gift to Xi Jinping.

Early this year, I chided Democrats for failing to acknowledge Bush's heroism in creating PEPFAR. I wrote that column because we all have cognitive biases that nudge us toward self-congratulatory narratives in which our own side is virtuously battling idiots on the other side. PEPFAR reminds us of the complicated truth, which is that in 2003, Bush both began a catastrophic war that killed hundreds of thousands of people and also started a program that saved 25 million lives.

Does that mess with our heads? Of course. But that's not necessarily a bad thing. The ability to navigate a messy, contradictory world is a mark of maturity — and of governing.

Now it's Republicans who need to muster the maturity to govern. And in that sense PEPFAR's reauthorization is a test for a once great political party that now sometimes seems to be fighting psychosis.

LETTERS

Can Civics Lessons Help Mend Society?

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "By Dropping Civics, Colleges Gave Fuel to the Culture Wars," by Debra Satz and Dan Edelstein (Opinion guest essay, Sept. 7):

As a humanities professor for three decades, I am frequently amazed at the — dare I say — hubris of my colleagues when it comes to their estimate of their capacity to mold the conscience of the Republic.

Professors Satz and Edelstein believe that the decline in prevalence of "Western Civ" courses in the curriculum has been a key element in the degradation of our civic culture. Their notion that some 40 hours of class time turned students' souls toward the light is indeed touching, but highly unlikely.

They neglect to mention, for example, that in the days they look back on fondly, when freshmen wrestled with the eternal verities revealed by Socrates, these courses seldom moved Southern whites to rethink their subjugation of Black people, or Northern whites to call their Southern brothers and sisters to account.

Colleges can do many things, but turning the culture away from its immemorial vices is not one of them.

THOMAS PEYSER
RICHMOND, VA.

TO THE EDITOR:

Anyone who had the good fortune to attend Eisenhower College in Seneca Falls, N.Y., during its all-too-short life can attest to the wisdom of this essay. Designated in 1968 by Congress as a "living memorial" to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the college embraced his belief in broadening minds and perspectives.

Countering the then trendy moves in higher education toward more freedom of curriculum choices, we were required to take a four-year World Studies program that went far beyond Western Civ. We delved into the history of civilization, East and West, from ancient times to our own, the major religions and philosophies, the arts, science, etc.

Too bad Eisenhower College, which closed in 1983, was such an outlier back then. Here's hoping the efforts at Stanford can start a new wave that will produce the kind of benefit my fellow alumni experienced during our alma mater's brief, shining moment.

I'm convinced that all those required courses helped us become more alert to the world around us, more confident in our own opinions, more willing to consider those of others.

TIM SMITH
REISTERSTOWN, MD.

TO THE EDITOR:

Debra Satz and Dan Edelstein make a compelling case about universities' responsibility to include civics in their curriculum. At a time when teens feel a growing distrust of government and when civic education and history knowledge are at all-time lows on our "Nation's Report Card," civic education has never been more important. Further, political polarization has made telling the story of America complicated not just for students, but also for their teachers.

But college is too late. Civic education needs to commence before high school commencement, if not during middle school. Our society owes members of the next generation the opportunity to understand American history, foundational texts, how the government is supposed to work and their role in our shared democracy.

Before starting to vote, let alone reaching the college campus, students deserve comprehensive civic education that strengthens democratic fluency, fosters civic skills and generates civic belonging. The future of American democracy depends on it.

CHARLES E. SAVENOR
NEW YORK

The writer, a rabbi, is executive director of Civic Spirit, which works with schools to enhance civic knowledge and engagement.

TO THE EDITOR:

I disagree with Debra Satz and Dan Edelstein of Stanford University, who argue that higher education has largely abandoned civic education.

At DePaul University, with support from the Teagle Foundation, we have implemented a liberal studies course, "Lived Civics, the Social Contract and Public Life," to build civic skills, historical knowledge and democratic dispositions among students.

Taught by teachers across the university (in political science and communications, but also accounting, writing and rhetoric, theater, music and art), students learn about historical events and political upheaval as the evolution and constant renegotiation of our founding contract.

In addition, the course is intentionally centered around fostering the democratic skill of listening, so that students gain an appreciation for one another's lived experiences across their political differences. The goal of the course is to frame public problems as shared problems, which are ours to address — together. We would be happy to share the curriculum widely.

MOLLY W. ANDOLINA, CHICAGO

The writer is a professor of political science at DePaul University.

DeSantis and Vaccines

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "DeSantis Disputes C.D.C. Vaccine Advice" (news article, Sept. 15):

It warms the cockles of my heart to know that Gov. Ron DeSantis is smarter and knows more than doctors, public health officials and infectious disease experts.

DAVID COWEN, SYOSSET, N.Y.

The Senate Dress Code: Casual or Just Sloppy?

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "The Senate Dress Code Gets a Casual Overhaul" (news article, Sept. 19):

In an era when so many norms are being destroyed and so many institutions — the U.S. Senate included — are being degraded, the last thing we need is a downgrading of the Senate dress code. This is especially true of Senator John Fetterman's outfits, which the rule change seems to be reacting to. These clothes are much more than simply "casual"; they are the absolute sloppiest and most thoughtless clothes you can imagine.

The way senators dress is symbolic, and symbols are important. Elegant, formal clothes convey the idea that the Senate is an important place where important work is being done. Mr. Fetterman's attire, in contrast, suggests that the Senate's work is no more important than doing chores around the house or going on a run to the grocery store. The symbolism is made all the more resonant when the clothes are on Mr. Fetterman's 6-foot-8 frame, to which the eye is naturally drawn.

Why does Senator Fetterman insist on dressing this way? If the purpose is his personal branding — to scrupulously maintain his workingman cred — then I think he is seriously underestimating working people. Just because they may not need to dress in suits for their own jobs doesn't mean they won't respect and understand when someone else does. And anyway, Mr. Fetterman's clothes are so sloppy that few Americans would go to work in them — the working class very much included.

FRED GROSSMAN, SEATTLE

TO THE EDITOR:

Republican senators' outrage about the relaxation of the dress code in the chamber is quite rich.

Where is the outrage against Senator Tommy Tuberville's blockade of military promotions? Where is the outrage against the Jan. 6 rioters and Donald Trump? Where is the outrage against the threats to shut down the government? The list could go on and on and on.

DAVID WYNN, LIVINGSTON, N.J.

The Times welcomes letters from readers. Letters must include the writer's name, address and telephone number. Those selected may be edited, and shortened to fit allotted space. Email: letters@nytimes.com

4 POLICY
The Defense Department will award $238 million in grants to promote innovation in the U.S. semiconductor industry.



4 LABOR
As contract talks in the U.S. inch along, Ford reaches a deal with workers in Canada, averting a second strike.



7 SPORTS
Just how good is Atlanta's offense? Its lineup is doing things that haven't been accomplished in decades.

Masks Off. Lipstick On. Foreign Cosmetics Makers Out.

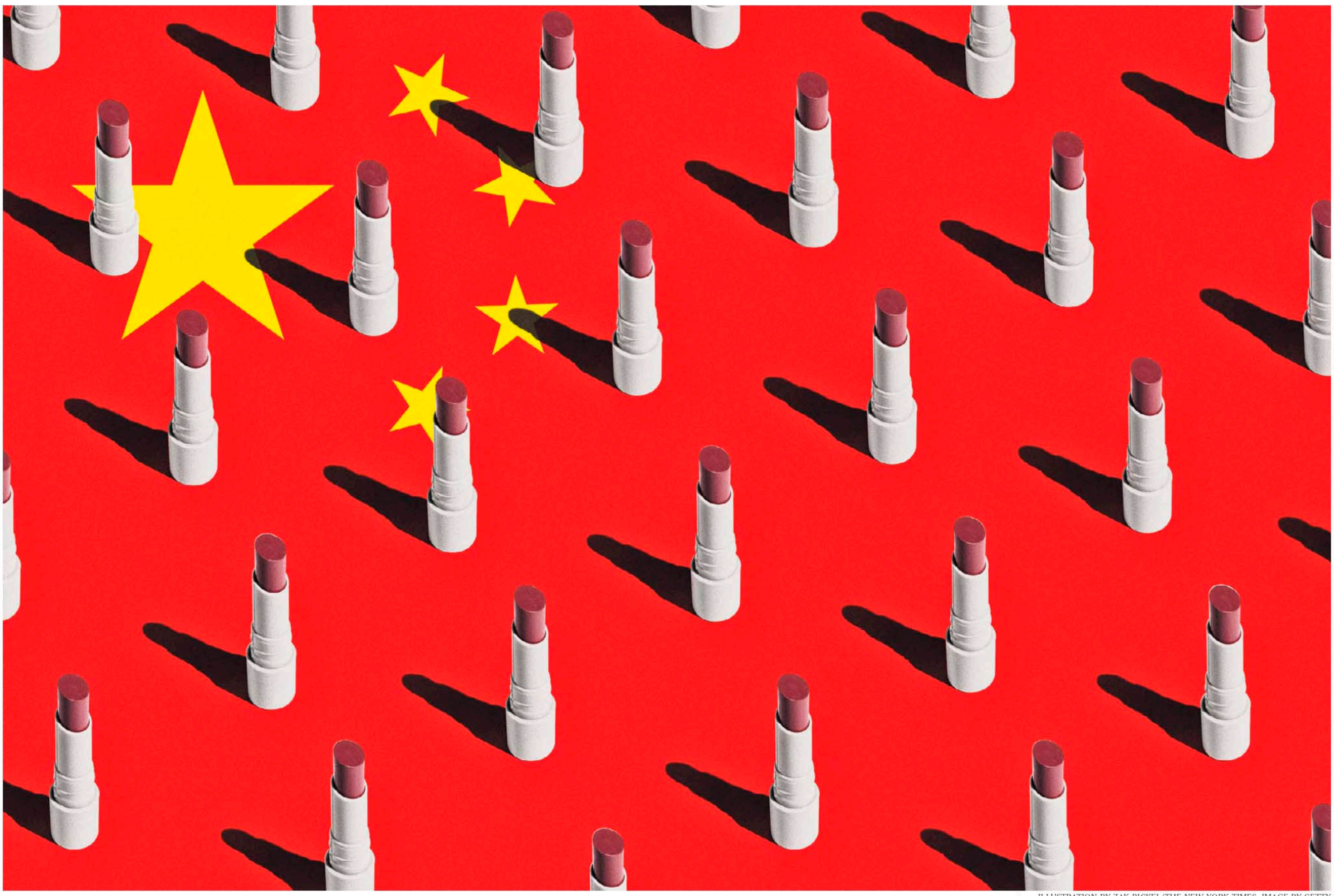


ILLUSTRATION BY ZAK BICKEL/THE NEW YORK TIMES; IMAGE BY GETTY

As China's beauty products companies thrive, many competitors are hobbled by curbs Beijing imposed during Covid.

By KEITH BRADSHER and ELIZABETH PATON

BEIJING — In the gloom of China's economy, one area of business is booming: cosmetics.

After enduring nearly three years of mandatory masks and frequent lockdowns during the pandemic, many Chinese consumers, wary of big-ticket purchases like apartments, are now splurging on lipstick, perfume, moisturizers and other personal care products.

But cosmetics companies from France, Japan, South Korea and the United States, which have invested heavily in China, are missing out on a lot of the action.

As China's cosmetics companies are booming, imports of cosmetics are wilting under regulations that the country imposed on foreign manufacturers during the pandemic.

While China's trade conflicts with the West over semiconductors pivot on national security and technological innovation, the dispute over cosmetics is largely about money.

"I'm not talking about peanuts," said Bruno Le Maire, France's finance minister. "For many French companies," he added, China "represents between 30 and 35 percent of their total revenues."

During a visit to China last month, Gina M. Raimondo, the U.S. commerce secretary, said the United States wanted to expand its exports of personal care products. "No one can argue that health and beauty aids interfere in our national security," Ms. Raimondo said.

Under rules that China introduced in 2021, companies must divulge every ingredient in their products and the precise quantities used. They must upload to a Chinese database the addresses

CONTINUED ON PAGE B4

Google Bard Is Still Erratic After a Boost

Kevin Roose
THE SHIFT

This week, Bard — Google's competitor to ChatGPT — got an upgrade.

One interesting new feature, called Bard Extensions, allows the artificial intelligence chatbot to connect to a user's Gmail, Google Docs and Google Drive accounts.

(Google also gave Bard the ability to search YouTube, Google Maps and a few other Google services, and it introduced a tool that would let users fact-check Bard's responses. But I'm going to focus on the Gmail, Docs and Drive integrations, because the ability to ask an A.I. chatbot questions about your own data is the killer feature here.)

Bard Extensions is designed to

CONTINUED ON PAGE B5

Why Price Of Gasoline Is Still Rising

By SANTUL NERKAR

Your eyes are not deceiving you: Gas prices are rising yet again. On Wednesday, the national average for unleaded gasoline was $3.88 per gallon, according to AAA, the highest level in nearly a year.

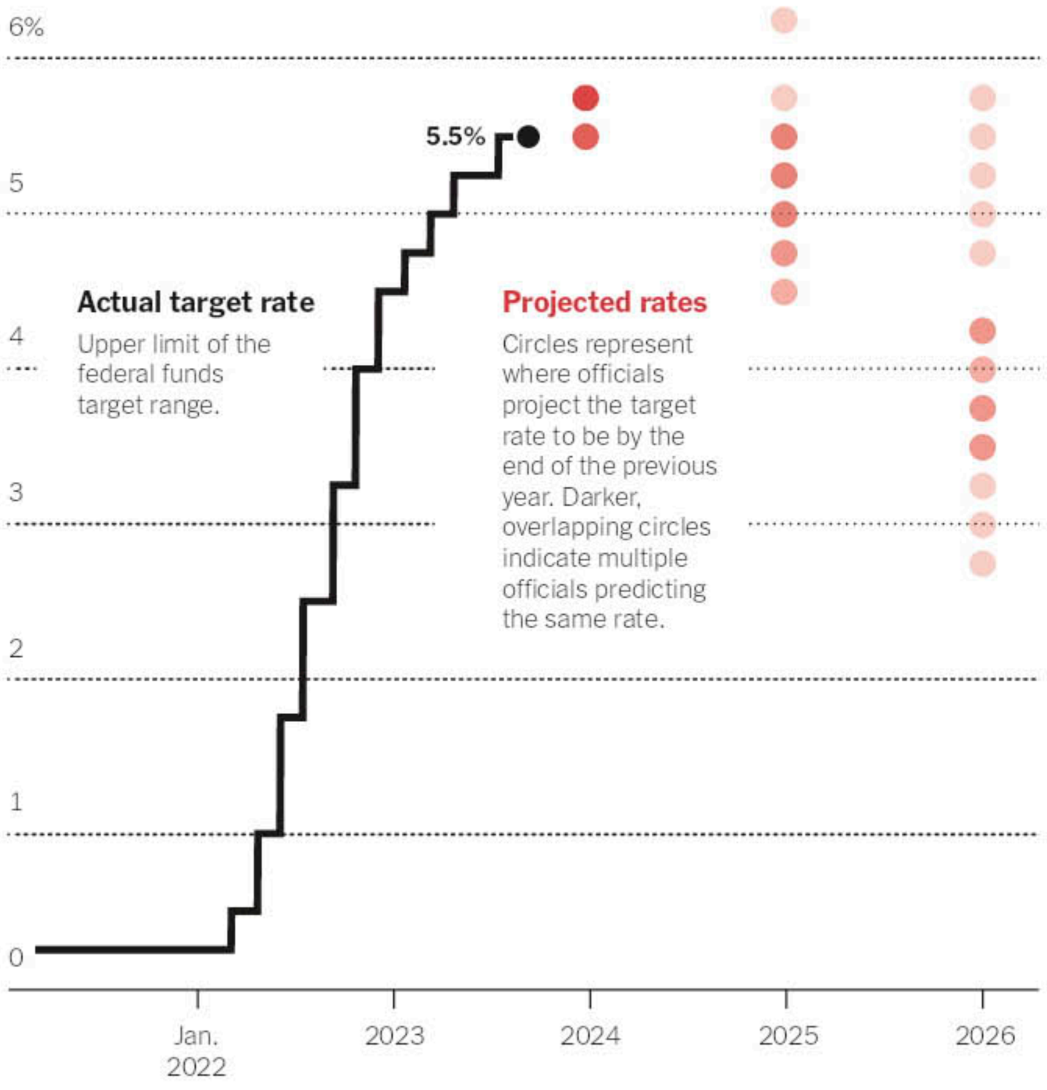
That's far below the peak in June 2022, when the average briefly ticked above $5 a gallon after Russia's invasion of Ukraine crimped global oil supplies and sent fuel costs skyrocketing. But it's still much higher than historical averages, even for summer, when prices tend to rise.

It has been a slow but steady increase. The price of a gallon of gas has risen around 20 percent since the start of the year and more than 8 percent since June 1, according to AAA. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February, by comparison, gas prices soared more than 40 percent in less than four months.

CONTINUED ON PAGE B3

Aiming for 'Soft Landing,' Fed Tries Rate Pause

Most Fed officials expect rates to rise by the end of this year.



Source: Federal Reserve
LAZARO GAMIO AND KARL RUSSELL/THE NEW YORK TIMES

By JEANNA SMIALEK

Federal Reserve officials left interest rates unchanged on Wednesday and released a roundly optimistic set of economic forecasts that showed inflation fading more swiftly this year even with a solidly growing economy.

Altogether, the news suggested that Fed officials were beginning to see a better chance of a "soft landing": a slowdown in inflation that does not require pronounced economic pain. While officials predicted that they could still make another rate increase before the end of 2023, they are treading cautiously to try to ensure that they do not overdo it and squeeze the economy more than is necessary to bring price increases back under control.

"We're taking advantage of the fact that we have moved quickly to move a little more carefully now," Jerome H. Powell, the Fed's chair, said during a news conference after its meeting.

The Fed's decision and its outlook suggested that a resilient economy was keeping central bankers both optimistic about growth — and firmly in inflation-fighting mode.

It was perhaps the most hopeful meeting since the Fed began its assault against rapidly rising prices 18 months ago. Inflation has faded substantially this summer even as consumers have continued spending and the labor market has held up, suggesting that healing from the pandemic and higher Fed interest rates are managing to weigh down price increases without tanking the economy.

Given that, Fed officials increasingly think they can be both patient and resolute in their fight to return inflation to normal levels. They kept interest rates at a range of 5.25 to 5.5 percent rather than nudging them higher, buying themselves more time to watch how the economy is shaping up and determine whether further adjustments are warranted.

But in addition to predicting that they could raise rates one more time this year, they forecast that they would keep borrowing costs higher for longer. Officials expect to cut rates just slightly next year, to 5.1 percent, up from

CONTINUED ON PAGE B3

The Digest

LODGING

In Crackdown, Airbnb Removes Fake Listings

Fake listings have emerged as a major problem for Airbnb, threatening to scare off consumers and prompting the short-term rental service to use artificial intelligence in an effort to crack down on fraudsters.

Airbnb says it has removed 59,000 fake listings and prevented another 157,000 from joining the platform this year.

Fake listings and high cleaning fees are among several issues that Airbnb said its users highlighted in a company survey. Others included high cleaning fees and a desire for lower prices.

The San Francisco company said more than 260,000 listings have lowered or removed cleaning fees this year, since it gave consumers the means to sort listings in order of all-in pricing.

Airbnb says the change in how prices are displayed discourages hosts from touting low prices but piling on extra fees. However, only about one-third of Airbnb renters are using it. *ASSOCIATED PRESS*

EARNINGS

General Mills Exceeds Sales and Profit Forecasts



ANDREW KELLY/REUTERS

General Mills topped first-quarter sales and profit estimates on Wednesday as higher prices for its breakfast cereals, snack bars and pet food products helped offset slowing demand.

Packaged food makers have increased prices multiple times over the last year to counter the spiraling impact from higher labor and input costs.

The higher prices have helped expand top-line and margins, volumes have taken a hit as customers have been less willing to spend on expensive food items and shifted to cheaper private label alternatives.

Organic sales at North America retail segment grew 4 percent as it saw a "modest" rebuild of retailer inventory in the quarter after being hit by weaker demand in the previous quarter.

General Mills reported net sales of $4.91 billion compared with expectations of $4.88 billion, according to LSEG data. *REUTERS*

EXECUTIVES

Ex-Chief of Qantas Leaves With Windfall

Australia's Qantas Airways said its former chief executive took a pay increase of 872 percent as he collected years' worth of long-term incentives on the way out, but added that it was cutting and withholding hefty bonuses amid damaging lawsuits.

Alan Joyce, who retired this month after a regulator lawsuit accused Qantas of selling tickets on thousands of already-canceled flights, took home 21.4 million Australian dollars ($13.9 million) in the 2023 financial year, according to the company's annual report, published on Wednesday.

Most of the amount was share-based incentives that Mr. Joyce was allowed to cash in after they vested, according to the report.

Qantas cut an additional short-term bonus for Mr. Joyce by one-fifth of the 2.7 million Australian dollars available and withheld it pending the outcome of two lawsuits that may result in hefty fines and further reputational turbulence, the report added. *REUTERS*

S&P 500 INDEX
−0.9%
4,402.2

DOW JONES INDUSTRIALS
−0.2%
34,440.88

NASDAQ COMPOSITE INDEX
−1.5%
13,469.13

10-YEAR TREASURY YIELD
4.37%
+0.01 points

CRUDE OIL (U.S.)
$89.66
−$0.82

GOLD (N.Y.)
$1,967.10
+$13.40

Stocks & Bonds

Markets Sag After the Fed's Announcement on Rates

By The Associated Press

U.S. stocks slumped on Wednesday after the Federal Reserve said it might not cut interest rates next year by as much as it had thought, regardless of how much Wall Street wants it.

The S&P 500 fell 41.75, or 0.9 percent, to 4,402.20. The Dow Jones industrial average lost 76.85, or 0.2 percent, to 34,440.88, and the Nasdaq composite dropped 209.06, or 1.5 percent, to 13,469.13.

The Fed held its main interest rate steady at its highest level in more than two decades, as was widely expected. Officials also indicated they could raise the federal funds rate one more time this year, as the Fed tries to get inflation back down to its target of 2 percent.

But Jerome H. Powell, the Fed chair, said it was close to hitting the peak on rates, if not there already.

Perhaps most important for the market, Fed officials suggested they might cut rates next year by only half a percentage point, rather than a full percentage point. That could be a negative for Wall Street, where investors crave rate cuts because of the boost they typically give to all kinds of investments.

Stocks initially held relatively steady after the release of the Fed's forecasts, but they slid later in the afternoon.

"As you move further and further away from the meeting, the message may sink in," said Sameer Samana, senior global market strategist at Wells Fargo Investment Institute. "We very much expect the markets to be knocked a little bit off their axis by this."

Treasury yields rose in the bond market after the Fed released its projections. They had already been climbing for months after strong reports on the U.S. economy suggested the Fed might need to keep interest rates higher for longer to fully drive down pressures on inflation.

The S&P 500 Index

Position of the S&P 500 index at 1-minute intervals on Wednesday

-- Previous Close: 4,443.95



Source: FactSet
THE NEW YORK TIMES

The yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 4.37 percent on Wednesday afternoon from less than 4.32 percent shortly before the Fed's announcement. It is close to where it was in 2007.

The two-year Treasury yield, which more closely tracks expectations for Fed action, jumped to 5.18 percent from 5.04 percent shortly before the Fed's announcement.

"Future meetings will be a tug of war between markets who want cuts and a Fed that is scared its job isn't done," said Brian Jacobsen, chief economist at Annex Wealth Management.

"The Fed is projecting it will hit its unemployment rate and inflation targets in 2026," he said. "Markets are more impatient than that. One year is an eternity to traders, let alone two years."

High rates hurt prices for all kinds of investments, and high-growth companies are typically among the hardest hit. Big Tech stocks were the heaviest weights on the S&P 500, and Microsoft, Apple and Nvidia all fell at least 2 percent.

Shares of several companies that just recently sold their stock on public markets for the first time also fell. Instacart dropped 10.7 percent as it gave back some of its gains from its first day of trading as a public stock.

On the winning side of Wall Street, shares of Textron climbed 4.9 percent for the biggest gain in the S&P 500 after it announced a deal in which NetJets has the option to purchase up to 1,000 of its Citation business jets over the next 15 years.

In stock markets abroad, the FTSE 100 in London rose 0.9 percent after a report showed U.K. inflation fell unexpectedly in August to its lowest level since Russia began its invasion of Ukraine.

Indexes were mostly weaker in Asia after data showed Japanese exports fell from year-ago levels for the second straight month. Exports to China sank 11 percent, as the world's second-largest economy continues to underperform expectations.

Japan's Nikkei 225 fell 0.7 percent, Hong Kong's Hang Seng dropped 0.6 percent and stocks in Shanghai slipped 0.5 percent.

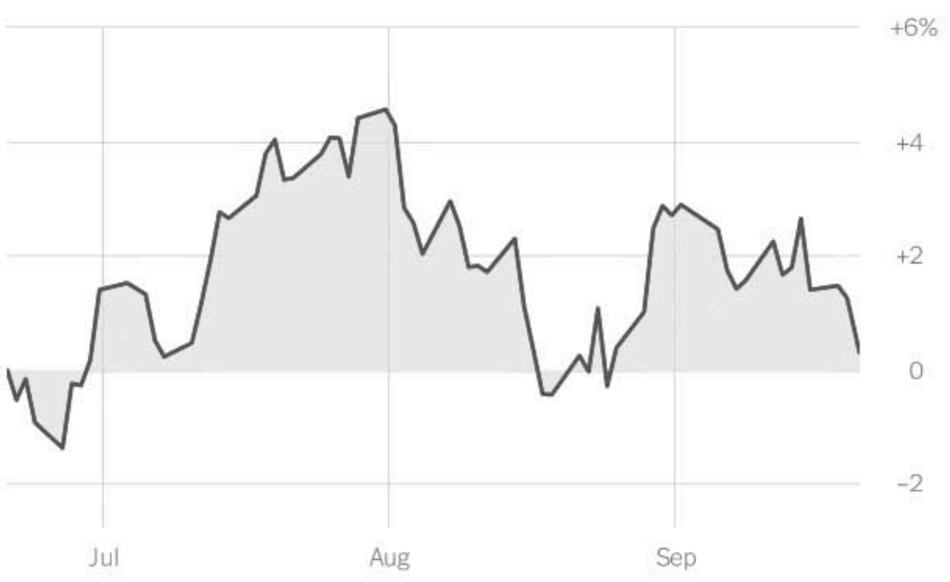
NEWSLETTER: DEALBOOK

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What Happened in Stock Markets Yesterday

POWERED BY FACTSET

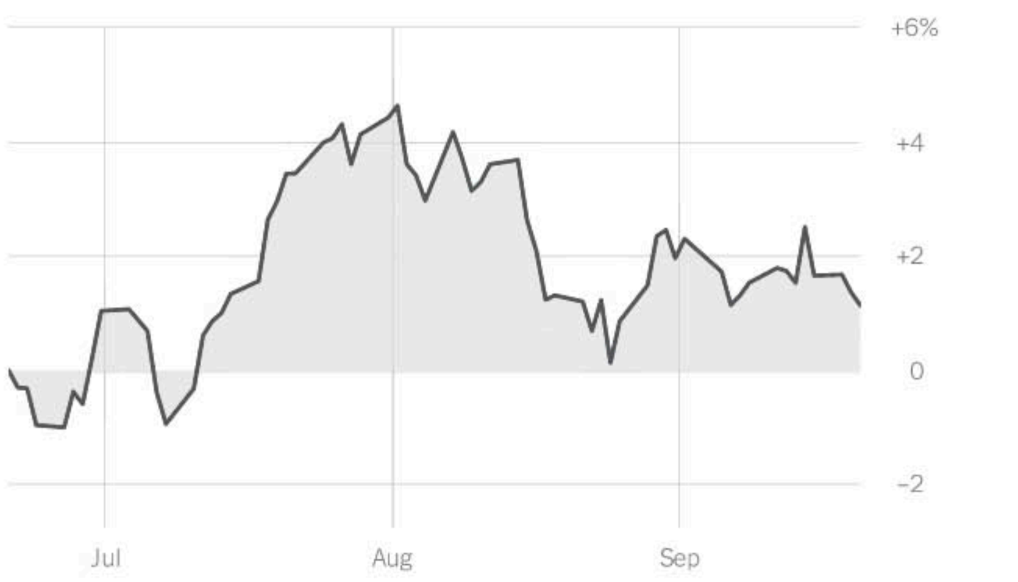
S&P 500 4,402.20 ↓ −0.9%
3 month performance: **+0.3%**



Nasdaq Composite Index 13,469.13 ↓ −1.5%
3 month performance: **−1.4%**



Dow Jones Industrials 34,440.88 ↓ −0.2%
3 month performance: **+1.1%**



Best performers

S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE
1. Textron (TXT)	$79.37	+4.9%
2. Autozone (AZO)	$2,583.36	+4.4
3. Western Digital (WDC)	$45.65	+3.9
4. Intl. Flavors & Fragrances (IFF)	$70.00	+3.2
5. Ball Corp (BALL)	$51.96	+2.8
6. Amgen (AMGN)	$271.46	+2.7
7. Xcel Energy (XEL)	$59.96	+2.5
8. UnitedHealth Group (UNH)	$492.13	+2.4
9. Humana (HUM)	$484.77	+2.3
10. IBM (IBM)	$149.83	+2.3

Worst performers

S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE
1. Zebra Technologies Co. (ZBRA)	$235.83	−6.5%
2. Mosaic (MOS)	$37.05	−5.9
3. Intel Corp (INTC)	$34.69	−4.5
4. WestRock (WRK)	$35.53	−3.7
5. Alphabet A (GOOGL)	$133.74	−3.1
6. Albemarle Co. (ALB)	$174.44	−3.1
7. Alphabet C (GOOG)	$134.59	−3.1
8. Paycom Software (PAYC)	$268.48	−3.0
9. Comerica (CMA)	$41.87	−3.0
10. Ceridian HCM (CDAY)	$68.28	−3.0

Most active

S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE	VOLUME IN MIL.
1. Tesla (TSLA)	$262.59	−1.5%	122
2. Intel Corp (INTC)	$34.69	−4.5	57
3. Apple (AAPL)	$175.49	−2.0	56
4. Advanced Micro Devices (AMD)	$100.34	−1.2	55
5. AT&T Inc. (T)	$15.55	+2.2	45
6. Amazon.com (AMZN)	$135.29	−1.7	44
7. Ford Motor (F)	$12.36	−1.6	37
8. NVIDIA (NVDA)	$422.39	−2.9	36
9. Alphabet A (GOOGL)	$133.74	−3.1	29
10. American Airlines Group (AAL)	$13.06	−1.0	28

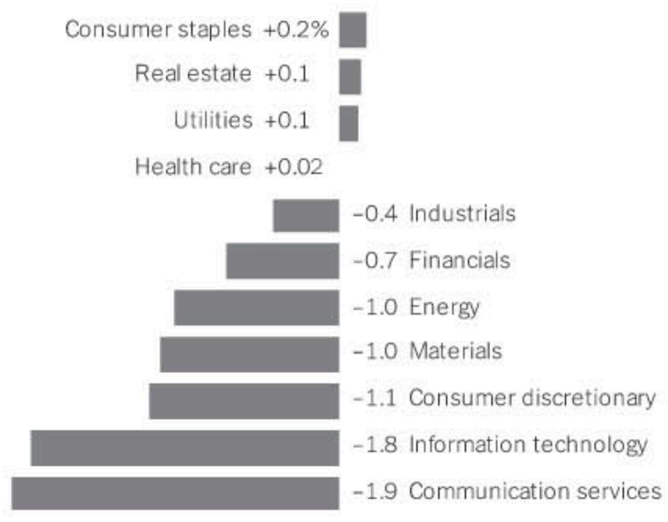
Large-cap stocks

	TOTAL RETURN 1 YR	TOTAL RETURN 5 YRS	TOTAL ASSETS IN BIL.
1. Vanguard Total Stock Market Index Fund Institutional Plus Shares (VSMPX)	+14.7%	+10.2%	1,368.8
2. Vanguard Instl 500 Index Trust (VFFSX)	+15.9	+11.1	908.4
3. Fidelity 500 Index Fund (FXAIX)	+15.9	+11.1	432.5
4. Vanguard Institutional Index Fund Institutional Shares (VINIX)	+15.9	+11.1	255.4
5. American Funds The Growth Fund of America Class R-6 (RGAGX)	+18.0	+9.8	234.4
6. Vanguard Growth Index Fund Investor Shares (VIGRX)	+21.6	+13.2	182.5
7. American Funds Washington Mutual Investors Fund Class R-6 (RWMGX)	+13.2	+10.0	160.4
8. Vanguard Value Index Fund Investor Shares (VIVAX)	+9.2	+8.0	149.4
9. American Funds Investment Company of America Class R-6 (RICGX)	+20.2	+9.9	118.2
10. American Funds Fundamental Investors Class R-6 (RFNGX)	+18.1	+9.3	118.1

Source: Morningstar

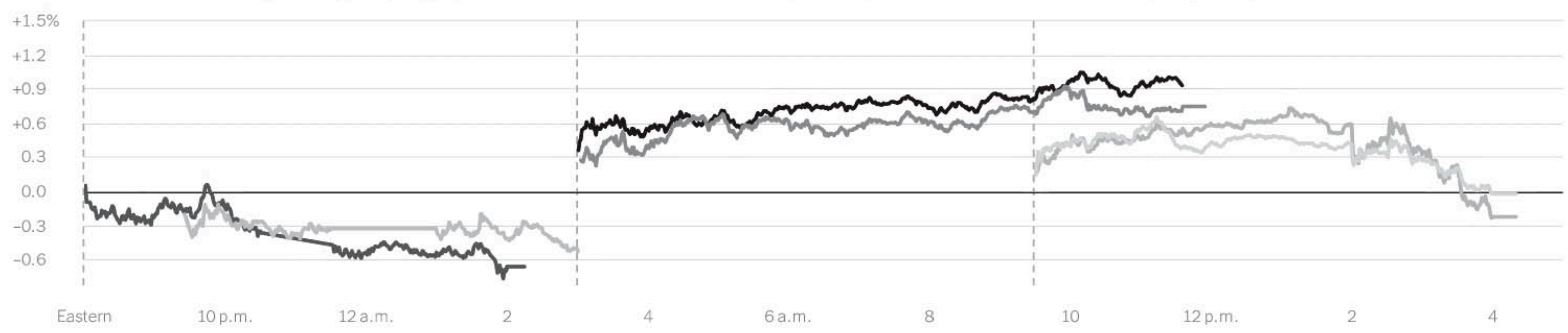
Sector performance

S&P 500 SECTORS



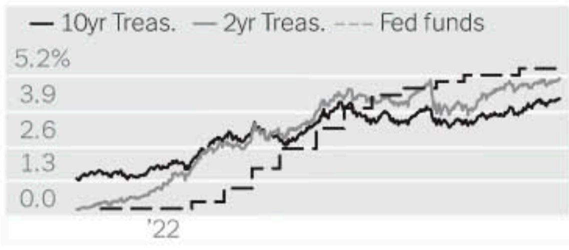
How stock markets fared yesterday in Asia ... ... in Europe ... and North America

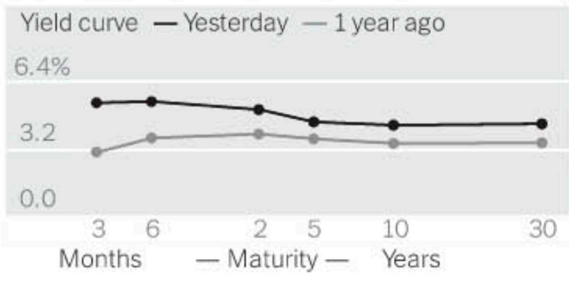
Nikkei 225 (Japan): −0.7%
Shanghai Composite (Shanghai): −0.5%
FTSE 100 (London): +0.9%
DAX (Frankfurt): +0.7%
Dow Jones Industrials (New York): −0.2%
S&P/TSX (Toronto): +0.0%



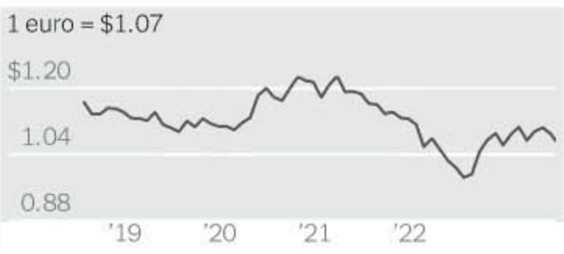
What Is Happening in Other Markets and the Economy

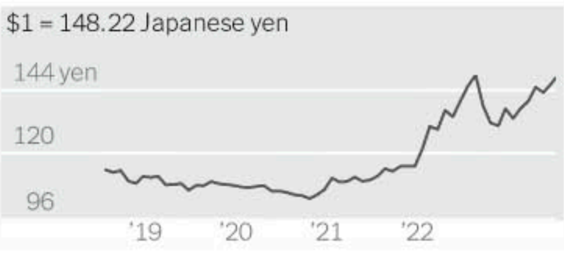
Bonds



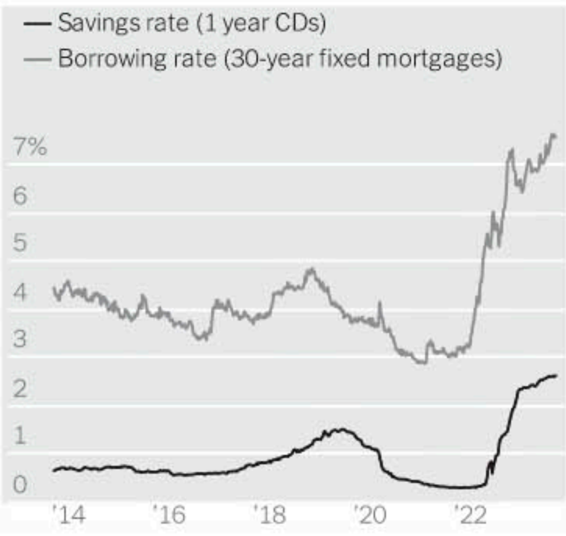


Currencies

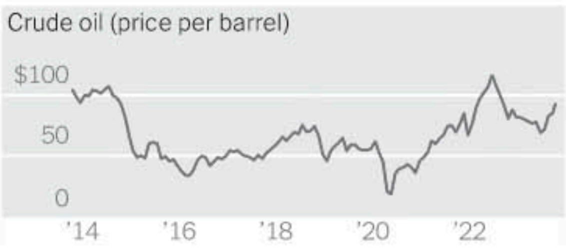


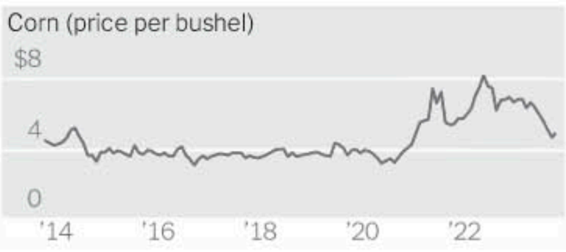


Consumer rates

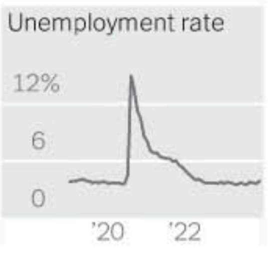


Commodities

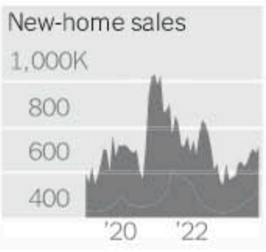


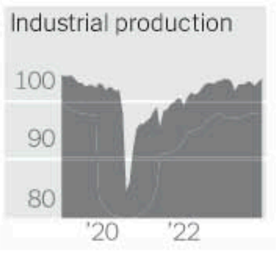


Economy









Inflation Rate In the U.K. Slips to 6.7%

By ESHE NELSON

LONDON — Inflation in Britain slowed for a third consecutive month in August, unexpectedly continuing its downward trend despite a jump in fuel prices.

Consumer prices rose 6.7 percent last month from a year earlier, slightly slower than the previous month, the Office for National Statistics said on Wednesday. Economists had expected inflation to rise after a global surge in energy prices. While higher prices at the pump added to inflationary pressures, they were offset by slower increases in the price of food and a monthly decline in the cost of hotel rooms.

Deeper Into the Numbers: Core inflation slowed faster than expected.

The volatility and international nature of energy prices mean policymakers are also closely watching other measures of inflation to determine how embedded price growth has become in the economy.

A key gauge of domestic price pressures is core inflation, which strips out energy and food costs. Last month, the annual rate of core inflation fell to 6.2 percent, from 6.9 percent in July, a faster decline than economists had predicted. It was driven by a slowdown in services inflation, another key measure because it reflects companies' labor costs — wages tend to be a persistent force of inflation.

Why It Matters: The government pledged to halve inflation.

As household budgets have been squeezed by high energy bills, grocery prices and other costs, Wednesday's data will bring some confidence that inflation is abating. The headline rate of inflation has slowed meaningfully from its peak in October, when it climbed above 11 percent.

Britain's prime minister, Rishi Sunak, pledged to halve inflation this year, a goal he is on track to meet. But price growth is still uncomfortably fast, and the government has remained cautious. On Wednesday, Jeremy Hunt, Britain's top finance official, said the government would "stick to our plan" to halve inflation "so we can ease the pressure on families and businesses."

How Britain Compares: Higher energy prices reignite inflation pressures.

Even as progress has been made in reducing price pressures in many countries, central bankers have been wary of declaring victory too soon as inflation rates are still above their targets. Rising energy prices pushed up inflation in the United States last month and added to inflation pressures in other European countries.

But the headline rate of inflation in Britain is still much higher than in the United States, where prices rose 3.7 percent in August, and the eurozone, where price growth averaged 5.2 percent for the 20 countries that use the euro.

What's Next: Britain's central bank will set interest rates on Thursday.

The Bank of England has raised interest rates to the highest level in 15 years in an effort to stamp out high inflation. Policymakers are trying to find a balance between tightening policy enough to return inflation to the central bank's 2 percent target without pushing the economy into a recession.

The latest decision on interest rates will be announced on Thursday. For months, members of the rate-setting committee have been divided over whether to take more action to bring down inflation or if they were at risk of overdoing it and causing unnecessary damage.

Policymakers voting to increase rates have been in the majority, so far. But amid signs that inflation is slowing and the British economy is weak, there have been growing bets among investors that the central bank might hold off on raising interest rates this week.

Wednesday's inflation data was lower than the central bank forecast last month.

Aiming for a 'Soft Landing,' the Fed Tries a Rate Pause

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

4.6 percent previously, based on their fresh set of quarterly economic projections.

That more elevated future rate path reflects that the economy is holding up better than expected in the face of the Fed's policy changes so far: Officials forecast stronger growth, lower unemployment and slower inflation at the end of 2023 than they had earlier predicted.

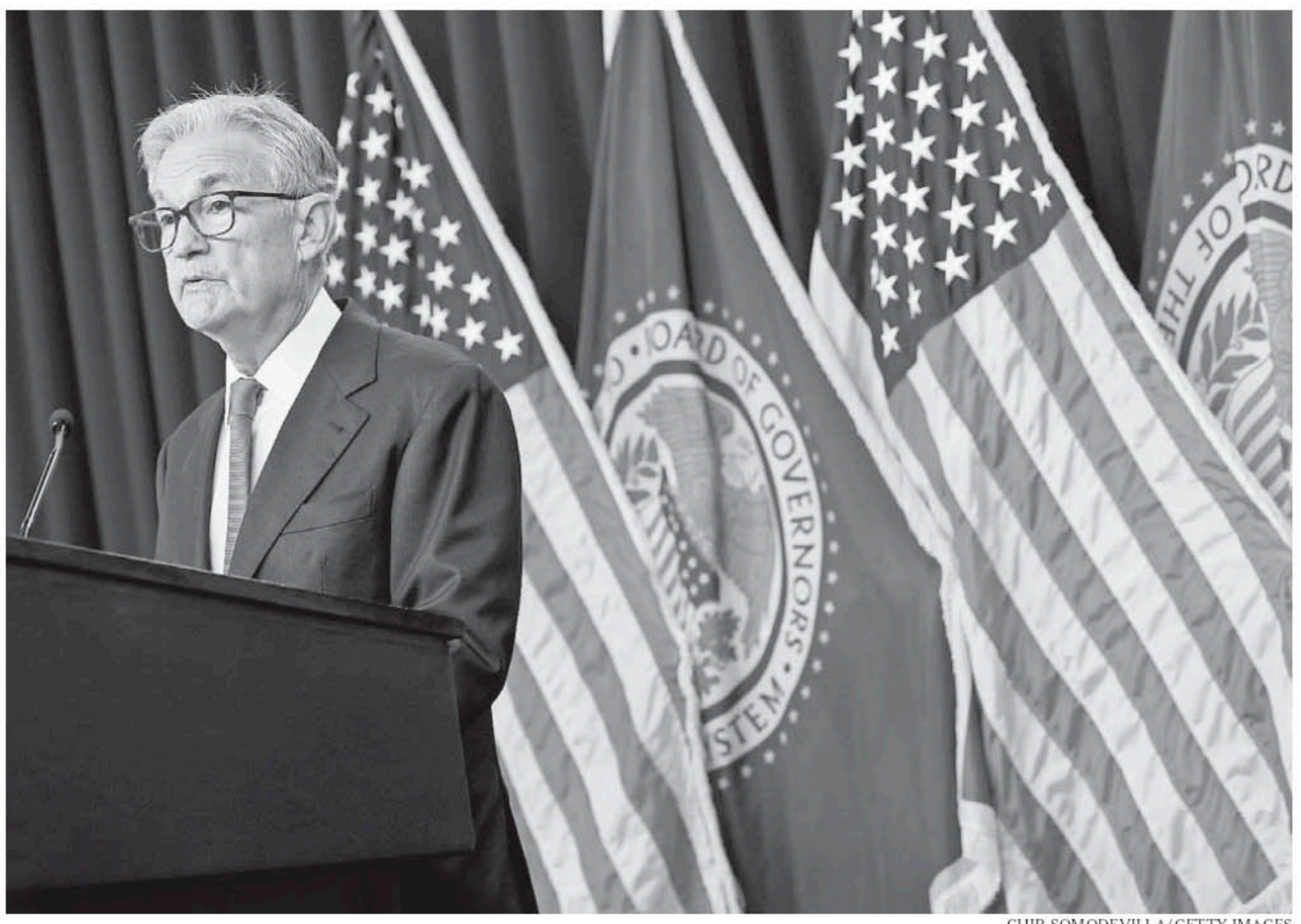
In all, the Fed's release and Mr. Powell's news conference has made clear that the Fed is keeping its options open at a moment when the economic outlook is uncertain. While inflation is finally cooling, risks remain. Rising gas prices, sustained strong demand for some goods and services, and other issues still threaten to keep prices climbing too quickly for comfort. Officials do not want to declare victory prematurely, only to see inflation take off again.

"We want to see convincing evidence, really, that we have reached the appropriate level" on rates, Mr. Powell said, suggesting that Fed officials would require further evidence that inflation was coming down. "We've seen progress, and we welcome that."

Fed officials have meetings in early November and mid-December, giving policymakers time to raise rates further in 2023 if they decide doing so is necessary.

Officials are trying to figure out how to thread a needle. They want to slow the economy enough to make sure that inflation comes firmly and fully back under control. But they do not want to go too far, crushing the economy more than is necessary to tame price increases and tossing people out of jobs in the process.

Calibrating monetary policy is difficult, because it takes months for the full effect of rate increases to trickle through the economy. Adjusting interest rates slowly by pausing along the way gives policymakers more time to assess incoming data, allowing them to make better-informed decisions.



CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

Jerome H. Powell, the Fed chair, said at a news conference that officials would "move a little more carefully now."

While central bankers aren't yet ready to predict with confidence that they'll achieve a soft landing, they are trying to improve the chances by creeping ahead cautiously with interest rate moves.

"I've always thought that the soft landing was a plausible outcome — that there was a path," Mr. Powell said Wednesday. "I do think it's possible," he said, making clear that the Fed has been aiming for that type of gentle slowdown.

"A soft landing is a primary objective," Mr. Powell said. "That's what we've been trying to achieve, for all this time."

So far, economic data have been telling a largely positive story. Hiring has slowed and unemployment has risen slightly in recent months, to 3.8 percent in August. Officials expect it to average 3.7 percent in the final three months of 2023, down from 3.9 percent in their June forecast, their fresh economic projections showed.

At the same time, consumers have continued spending, which has helped to keep the economy chugging along at a solid pace. Officials upgraded their growth outlook in the fresh forecasts.

Optimistic, but cautious of declaring victory too quickly.

And even as the job market and overall economy have held up in the face of interest rate increases, inflation has faded substantially this summer.

That has happened partly because pandemic disruptions are receding and partly because the Fed's higher interest rates are making mortgages, leases and business loans more expensive, cooling key parts of the economy.

The Personal Consumption Expenditures price index — the Fed's preferred measure of inflation — climbed 3.3 percent in July from a year earlier. That was down notably from a peak last summer of 7 percent, though it was still well above the 2 percent growth that the Fed targets.

The Fed pays even closer attention to a "core" index that strips out volatile food and fuel costs, and that measure climbed 4.2 percent in July, the latest month for which data is available.

Fed officials expect the core inflation measure to finish the year at 3.7 percent, suggesting that they still think a more marked slowdown is coming. But they think that it will take time for inflation to return fully to their goal: They do not expect 2 percent core inflation until 2026.

"It does read very much like a Goldilocks," Blerina Uruci, chief U.S. economist at T. Rowe Price, said of the Fed's economic projections. "We're basically getting a deceleration in inflation with less pain on the economic front."

When it comes to growth, "they are not seeing the deceleration that they would have anticipated, given the amount of monetary policy tightening that they have done," Ms. Uruci said.

Still, risks loom ahead for economic growth. Higher interest rates are still trickling through markets, and they could combine with the resumption of federal student loan payments, strikes at major automakers and a possible government shutdown to rattle consumer confidence and slow the economy in coming months.

That means that while officials expect to leave rates at high levels next year, those forecasts are anything but certain — and not, as Mr. Powell emphasized repeatedly on Wednesday, a set-in-stone plan.

The debate over the coming months is likely to focus on whether rates do need to climb again. And the question for next year is likely to be how long interest rates need to stay so high.

"They're very careful to avoid over-tightening," said Gennadiy Goldberg, head of U.S. rates strategy at T.D. Securities. "They're no longer as cavalier about delivering rate hike after rate hike."

But officials also want to avoid changing their stance prematurely. If inflation flares up again, it could come at a serious cost, prodding consumers to expect higher prices in the future and making it tougher and more painful to stamp out inflation in the longer run.

"We are committed to achieving and sustaining a stance of monetary policy that is sufficiently restrictive" to lower inflation, Mr. Powell said. "Given how far we have come, we are in a position to proceed carefully."

Gas Prices Creep Higher, Challenging Efforts to Rein In Inflation

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

The national average masks some big differences around the country. In California, gas prices have climbed more than 10 percent in just the last month, to an average of $5.79 per gallon. In Georgia and Florida, prices have fallen in the same period, to $3.36 and $3.67.

High gas prices are a headache for elected officials and consumers, particularly less affluent Americans, and they present a challenge for policymakers at the Federal Reserve, who have sought to rein in rapid inflation over the past 18 months.

But gas prices don't factor into "core inflation," a measure closely watched by the Fed that strips out energy and food prices because of their volatility. As Chair Jerome H. Powell put it on Wednesday, energy prices "mostly don't tell you about where the economy is going." Still, Mr. Powell acknowledged that they're important in forming consumer sentiment and expectations.

"Energy prices being higher is a significant thing," Mr. Powell said on Wednesday, adding that higher, sustained energy prices over time can affect consumer spending.

Here's what you need to know about what's causing the recent spike at the pump and where gas prices could go next.

What's causing the increase?

Gas prices are primarily influenced by the price of oil on commodity markets, which means they can be affected by a variety of factors, including geopolitics, the weather and the mood of financial investors.

Crude oil prices have jumped in recent months: Since June 1, the American crude benchmark, West Texas Intermediate, has climbed nearly 30 percent. By Wednesday, it was trading at more than $91 a barrel, the highest level since November 2022.

One reason is that Saudi Arabia and Russia have cut production through the end of 2023. Another is that despite China's economic downturn, it has continued importing oil at a high rate to mitigate geopolitical risks and shore up its manufacturing and transportation industries, said Clay Seigle, director of global oil services at Rapidan Energy Group.

The unusually hot summer in the Northern Hemisphere also contributed. The heat led to reduced production capacity at refineries, said Aakash Doshi, head of commodities in the North America division at Citi Research.

The recent jump in prices in California, which accounts for one-tenth of U.S. gasoline consumption according to the Energy Information Administration, is partly a result of the maintenance of refineries. The state typically has the highest prices in the country in part because the state's environmental regulations require a unique blend, making supplies tight.

According to Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy, an app that tracks gas prices at stations across the country, at least four refineries in California have had problems in the last few weeks that have led to interruptions in service.

The Strategic Petroleum Reserve — which President Biden has tapped to help drive down oil and gas prices — is historically low. The government has delayed restocking the reserve because of high prices and is unlikely to do so until prices fall from where they are now.

The pressure could ease, though.

In most states, the fall brings with it a switch to a cheaper blend of gasoline containing more butane. (California makes this change in October.) Gas prices also tend to drop during the fall as demand retreats after peak driving season.

"The worst has passed in terms of high gas prices and the effects they have on consumers," said Tom Kloza, global head of energy analysis at Oil Price Information Service.

Global economic growth is also projected to slow in 2024, which means there will be less demand for oil, pushing gas prices back down, Mr. Doshi said.

The production cuts from Saudi Arabia and Russia may not continue into the new year, some analysts say, potentially removing another pressure point.

The cuts, which drove prices up by restricting supply, have already been lucrative for the world's major oil producers, known collectively as OPEC Plus. That means, Mr. Seigle said, that there is not much need for the oil producers to extend the cuts for a prolonged period, which could lead to excessive energy price inflation and depressed consumption.

"They should be looking at today's oil market through the lens of 'mission accomplished,'" Mr. Seigle said.

U.S. gasoline price, daily average



Source: AAA THE NEW YORK TIMES

IN THE UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE

In re: YELLOW CORPORATION, *et al.*,[1] Debtors.	Chapter 11 Case No. 23-11069 (CTG) (Joint Administration Requested)

NOTICE OF AUCTIONS FOR THE SALE OF THE DEBTORS' ASSETS

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE OF THE FOLLOWING:

On September 15, 2023, the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware (the "Court") entered the *Order (I)(A) Approving the Bidding Procedures For the Sale or Sales of the Debtors' Assets, (B) Scheduling Auctions and Approving the Form and Manner of Notice Thereof; (C) Scheduling Sale Hearings and Approving the Form and Manner of Notice Thereof; (II)(A) Approving the Sale of the Debtors' Assets Free and Clear of Liens, Claims, Interests and Encumbrances and (B) Approving the Assumption and Assignment of Executory Contracts and Unexpired Leases; and (III) Granting Related Relief* [Docket No. 575] (the "Order"),[2] authorizing the above-captioned debtors and debtors in possession (collectively, the "Debtors") to market and conduct an auction or auctions (if any) (each, an "Auction," and collectively, the "Auctions") to sell the Assets free and clear of liens, claims, encumbrances, and other interests (except as may be set forth in the applicable definitive Sale documentation), with all such liens, claims, encumbrances, and other interests attaching with the same validity and priority to the applicable Sale proceeds. The Auction(s) (if any) will be governed by the bidding procedures approved pursuant to the Order and attached as Exhibit 1 thereto (the "Bidding Procedures").

Copies of the Order, the Bidding Procedures, and other documents related thereto are available by visiting the Debtors' restructuring website at https://dm.epiq11.com/YellowCorporation.

Any person or entity who wishes to participate in the Auction(s) must comply with the participation requirements, bid requirements, and other requirements set forth in the Bidding Procedures. The Bid Deadline for the Rolling Stock (as defined in the Bidding Procedures) is October 13, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. (prevailing Eastern Time) and for the Non-Rolling Stock Assets (*e.g.*, Real Property Assets, Intellectual Property, and Other Assets (each as defined in the Bidding Procedures) is November 9, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. (prevailing Eastern Time).

The Debtors intend to conduct one or more Auctions (if required) at which Auction(s) (if any) they will consider Qualified Bids (as defined in the Bidding Procedures) submitted to the Debtors and their advisors, by and pursuant to the Bidding Procedures and as set forth in the Order. With respect to the Assets constituting Rolling Stock (as defined in the Bidding Procedures), the Debtors intend to commence the Auction (if required) on **October 18, 2023, at 10 a.m. (prevailing Eastern Time)**, either in-person or by videoconference or such other form of remote communication established by the Debtors (to be communicated to Qualified Bidders in advance); and, with respect to the Assets constituting Non-Rolling Stock Assets (*e.g.*, Real Property Assets, Intellectual Property, and Other Assets (each as defined in the Bidding Procedures)), the Debtors intend to commence the Auction (if required) on **November 28, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. (prevailing Eastern Time)** either in-person or by videoconference or such other form of remote communication established by the Debtors (to be communicated to Qualified Bidders in advance).

The Sale Hearing to consider approval of the Sale(s) of Assets constituting Rolling Stock to the Winning Bidder(s) at the applicable Auction will be held before the Honorable Craig T. Goldblatt at the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware, 824 North Market Street, 3rd Floor, Courtroom #7, Wilmington, Delaware 19801, on **October 31, 2023, at 11:00 a.m. (prevailing Eastern Time)**. The Sale Objection Deadline to object to the Winning Bid(s) (and designation of the Back Up Bid(s), as applicable) with respect to the Rolling Stock is **October 25, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. (prevailing Eastern Time)**.

The Sale Hearing to consider approval of the Sale(s) of the Assets constituting Non-Rolling Stock Assets (*e.g.*, Real Property Assets, Intellectual Property, and Other Assets) to the Winning Bidder(s) at the applicable Auction will be held before the Honorable Craig T. Goldblatt at the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware, 824 North Market Street, 3rd Floor, Courtroom #7, Wilmington, Delaware 19801, on **December 12, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. (prevailing Eastern Time)**. The Sale Objection Deadline to object to the Winning Bid(s) (and designation of the Back Up Bid(s), as applicable) with respect to the Non-Rolling Stock Assets is **December 8, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. (prevailing Eastern Time)**.[3]

The Debtors reserve the right to modify the Bidding Procedures in consultation with the Consultation Parties in accordance with the Bidding Procedures and the Order.

All requests directed to the Debtors in connection with the foregoing, or for further information regarding the Bidding Procedures and participation therein, or for further information regarding the Assets, must be directed to: yellow@ducerapartners.com. All Potential Bidders (as defined in the Bidding Procedures) are instructed to review the Bidding Procedures in consultation with counsel.

[1] A complete list of each of the Debtors in these chapter 11 cases may be obtained on the website of the Debtors' proposed claims and noticing agent at https://dm.epiq11.com/YellowCorporation. The location of Debtors' principal place of business and the Debtors' service address in these chapter 11 cases is: 11500 Outlook Street, Suite 400, Overland Park, Kansas 66211.

[2] Capitalized terms used but not defined herein shall have the meanings ascribed to them in the Order or the Bidding Procedures, as applicable.

[3] Upon any Sale of Assets located in Canada or otherwise held by Debtors domiciled in Canada (collectively, the "Canadian Assets"), the Foreign Representative will seek recognition of the applicable Sale Order(s) of the Canadian Assets in the Canadian Court, which recognition shall be a condition to closing such Sale(s), as soon as practicable after the Court's entry of the applicable Sale Order(s) (subject to the availability of the Canadian Court). Further information and documentation (including pleadings) regarding the Canadian Assets can be accessed at https://www.alvarezandmarsal.com/YRCFreightCanada.

IN THE UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE

In re: AF Liquidation, Inc., *et. al* (f/k/a AeroFarms, Inc. *et. al*),[1] Debtors.	Chapter 11 Case No. 23-10737 (MFW) (Jointly Administered)

Hearing Date: October 24, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. (ET)
Objection Deadline: October 17, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. (ET)

PUBLICATION NOTICE OF (I) APPROVAL OF COMBINED DISCLOSURE STATEMENT AND PLAN ON AN INTERIM BASIS FOR SOLICITATION PURPOSES ONLY; (II) HEARING TO CONSIDER (A) FINAL APPROVAL OF COMBINED DISCLOSURE STATEMENT AND PLAN AND (B) CONFIRMATION OF COMBINED DISCLOSURE STATEMENT AND PLAN; (III) DEADLINE FOR VOTING ON COMBINED DISCLOSURE STATEMENT AND PLAN; AND (IV) DEADLINE FOR FILING OBJECTIONS TO CONFIRMATION OF COMBINED DISCLOSURE STATEMENT AND PLAN

On August 25, 2023, the above-captioned debtors and debtors in possession (the "Debtors") filed the *Combined Disclosure Statement and Joint Chapter 11 Plan Proposed by the Debtors and the Official Committee of Unsecured Creditors* [D.I. 297] (as may be amended, modified, or supplemented, the "Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan").

The Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan explains the Debtors' plan and has been approved on an interim basis by order of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware (the "Bankruptcy Court") [D.I. 345] (the "Interim Approval Order") for use by the Debtors in soliciting acceptances or rejections to the Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan from holders of Impaired Claims entitled to receive distributions under the Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan. Copies of the Interim Approval Order and the Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan can be obtained free of charge at the website maintained by Omni Agent Solutions. (the "Voting Agent") at https://omniagentsolutions.com/AeroFarms; or by email at AeroFarmsInquiries@omniagnt.com with a reference to "AeroFarms" in the subject line, or by calling the toll-free information line at (888) 480 -9117 or, if calling from outside the United States or Canada, at (747) 263 -0668.

Summary of Key Dates: A table summarizing the key dates is included below for ease of reference:

DEADLINE / HEARING	DATE
Voting Record Date	September 18, 2023
Date Solicitation Will Commence	September 18, 2023
Deadline to File Rule 3018 Motions	September 22, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. (ET)
Deadline to Object to Rule 3018 Motions	October 6, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. (ET)
Plan Supplement	October 10, 2023
Voting Deadline	October 17, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. (ET)
Deadline to Object to Confirmation and Final Approval of Adequacy of Information	October 17, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. (ET)
Deadline to file reply in support of Confirmation and Final Approval of Adequacy of Information	October 19, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. (ET)
Combined Hearing	October 24, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. (ET)

Voting On The Plan: Holders of Claims in Classes 7, 8, and 9 (the "Voting Classes") are entitled to vote to accept or reject the Plan as they are Impaired and receiving distributions under the Plan; holders of Claims in Classes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are Unimpaired and deemed to accept the Plan; and holders of Claims in Classes 10 and 11 are Impaired and deemed to reject the Plan as they are receiving no distributions under the Plan. If you are a holder of a Claim against the Debtors as of **September 18, 2023** (the "Voting Record Date") and in a Voting Class, the deadline by which ballots accepting or rejecting the Plan must be received is **October 17, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) (the "Voting Deadline"). If you are in a Voting Class, for your vote to be counted, your Ballot must be properly completed, signed, and returned so that it is actually received by the Voting Agent before the Voting Deadline, unless such time is extended in writing by the Debtors, for your vote to be counted.**

- Your Ballot must be returned by (a) first-class mail (using the reply envelope provided or otherwise as set forth below), (b) overnight courier, or (c) personal delivery at the following address: AeroFarms, Inc. et al. Ballot Processing, c/o Omni Agent Solutions, 5955 De Soto Ave,. Suite 100, Woodland Hills, CA 91367.
- In addition, **holders of Claims in Voting Classes may submit their Ballot via upload through the electronic Ballot submission portal on the Debtors' case website at** https://omniagentsolutions.com/AeroFarms-ballots. Instructions for electronic, online transmission of Ballots will be set forth on such website. **Ballots will not be accepted by email, telecopy, or facsimile.** If your Ballot is not received by the Voting Agent on or before the Voting Deadline, and such Voting Deadline is not extended by the Debtors, your vote will not be counted.

Important Information Regarding Releases: If you vote to accept or are deemed to accept the Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan, you will have consented to the Third-Party Release contained in Section 8.3 of the Plan to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law. If you vote to reject the Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan or are entitled to vote and did not vote either to accept or reject the Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan, you may elect not to grant the Third-Party Release contained in Section 8.3 of the Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan by marking the appropriate box on your Ballot. If you are entitled to submit a Ballot and you vote to reject the Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan or do not vote either to accept or reject the Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan and submit your Ballot without the applicable box checked, you will have consented to the Third-Party Release contained in Section 8.3 of the Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law.

Third-Party Release (Section 8.3): *Effective as of the Effective Date, to the fullest extent permissible under applicable law, as such law may be extended or integrated after the Effective Date, each of the Releasing Parties shall be deemed to, completely, conclusively, absolutely, unconditionally, irrevocably, and forever, release, waive, void and extinguish each Debtor, Liquidation Trust, and Released Party from any claim, Claim, Cause of Action, obligation, suit, judgment, damages, debt, right, remedy or liability whatsoever (including any derivative claims or Causes of Action asserted or that may be asserted on behalf of the Debtors and their Estates), whether known or unknown, foreseen or unforeseen, existing or hereinafter arising, in law, equity, or otherwise, for any act or omission in connection with, relating to, or arising out of the Debtors (including the management, ownership, or operation thereof, including as such entities existed prior to or after the Petition Date), the Chapter 11 Cases, negotiation, preparation, Filing, and consummation of the Sale Transaction, the marketing and sale process related to the Sale Transaction, the negotiation, preparation, dissemination, solicitation, and Filing of this Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan, the Filing of the Chapter 11 Cases, the settlement of Claims or renegotiation of Executory Contracts or Leases, the pursuit of confirmation of this Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan, the consummation of this Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan, or the administration of this Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan or the property to be Distributed under this Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan, the Wind-Down, or upon any other act or omission, transaction, agreement, event or other occurrence taking place on or before the Effective Date (including before the Petition Date) related or relating to the foregoing; provided that any right to enforce the Purchase Agreement, the Plan, the Final DIP Order (if and to the extent applicable), and Confirmation Order is not so released; provided further, however, that notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein, the provisions of this Section 8.3 shall not apply with respect to any Unimpaired Claim until such Unimpaired Claim has been paid in full in the Allowed amount of such Claim determined in accordance with applicable law, or on terms agreed to between the holder of such Claim and the Liquidation Trustee or the Debtors, at which time this Section 8.3 shall apply in all respects as to the applicable unimpaired Claim.*

Entry of the Confirmation Order shall constitute the Bankruptcy Court's approval of the releases described in Section 8.3 hereof, which includes by reference each of the related provisions and definitions contained in this Plan, and further, shall constitute the Bankruptcy Court's finding that each release described in Section 8.3 is: (1) by virtue of the opt-out procedure, fully consensual; (2) in exchange for the good and valuable consideration provided by the Released Parties; (3) a good-faith settlement and compromise of claims released; (4) fair, equitable, and reasonable; (5) given and made after due notice and opportunity for hearing; and (6) a bar to any of the Releasing Parties asserting any claim, Cause of Action, or liability related thereto, of any kind whatsoever, against any of the Released Parties or their property, released pursuant to the releases described herein.

Notwithstanding anything contained herein to the contrary, the foregoing release does not release (i) any obligations of any party under the Plan or any document, instrument, or agreement executed to implement the Plan, (ii) any obligations of any party under a Sale Transaction or any document, instrument, or agreement executed to implement a Sale Transaction, (iii) the rights of the Debtors with respect to any confidentiality provisions or covenants restricting competition in favor of the Debtors under any employment agreement with a current or former employee of the Debtors, (iv) the rights of Holders of Allowed Claims or Interests to receive distributions under the Plan, (v) Retained Causes of Action, (vi) defenses to any Claims filed, scheduled or asserted by any of the Released Parties, whether or not such defenses are to be brought by objections, complaints or other similar types of pleadings.

"Releasing Parties" *shall mean collectively, and in each in case in its capacity as such: (a) the Debtors; (b) the Committee and each of its members; (c) each Holder of a Claim or Interest that (x) votes to accept or reject, or are deemed to accept, the Plan, or (y) abstains from voting on the Plan, and, in the case of either (x) or (y), does not opt out of the voluntary release contained in Section 8.3 hereof by checking the opt out box on the ballot, and returning it in accordance with the instructions set forth thereon, or file an objection to the Plan, indicating that they opt not to grant the releases provided in the Plan; (d) the Prepetition Secured Parties; (e) the DIP Lenders; (f) DVC; (g) each Holder of a Claim or Interest whose Claim or Interest, including a Claim or Interest arising under an Executory Contract or Lease, has been assumed by the Purchaser in the Sales Transaction; and (h) the Related Parties of the foregoing but only to the extent such Related Party would be obligated to release under principles of agency if it were so directed by the applicable Person or Entity in clauses (a) through (g).*

"Released Parties" *shall mean collectively, and in each case in its capacity as such: (a) the Committee and each of its members; (b) all Holders of Claims or Interests that (i) vote to accept the Plan, or (ii) abstain from voting on the Plan and do not affirmatively opt out of the releases provided under, or object to, the Plan; (c) the Prepetition Secured Parties; (d) the DIP Lenders; (e) DVC and (f) with respect to each of the Debtors, the Liquidation Trust, and each of the foregoing Entities in clauses (a) through (e), the Related Parties of such Entities; provided, that any Holder of a Claim or Interest that opts out of the releases or objects to the Plan shall not be a "Released Party." David Rosenberg is not a Released Party.*

"Related Parties" *shall mean, with respect to any (w) Person or Entity, (x) such Person's or Entity's current and former direct or indirect subsidiaries, affiliates, parents, predecessors, successors, and assigns, (y) with respect to each of the foregoing in clause (w) and (x), their current and former directors, managers, officers, limited partners, general partners, equity holders (regardless of whether such interests are held directly or indirectly), predecessors, participants, successors, and assigns, (z) with respect to each of the foregoing in clause (w) through (y), each of their respective current and former equity holders, officers, directors, managers, principals, shareholders, members, management companies, fund advisors, employees, agents, designees, trustees, advisory board members, financial advisors, partners, attorneys, accountants, investment bankers, consultants, representatives, and other professionals or representatives, and any other fiduciaries to such Person or Entity with any involvement related to the Debtors; (zz) with respect to each of the foregoing in clauses (w) through (z), such Person's or Entity's respective heirs, executors, estates, servants, and nominees; but excluding David Rosenberg.*

Challenging Your Claim For Voting Purposes Only. If you wish to challenge the Debtors' classification or amount of your claim, you must file a motion (a "Rule 3018 Motion") for an order temporarily allowing your Claim in a different classification or amount for purposes of voting to accept or reject the Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan and serve such motion on the Debtors so that it is received by **September 22, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)**. Such creditor's ballot will not be counted unless temporarily allowed by the Bankruptcy Court for voting purposes, after notice and a hearing prior to or at the Combined Hearing (as defined below).

Combined Hearing and Filing Objections to the Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan. A hearing to consider final approval of the adequacy of information contained in the Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan pursuant to section 1125 of the Bankruptcy Code and confirmation of the Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan pursuant to section 1129 of the Bankruptcy Code will be held on **October 24, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. (ET)**, or as soon thereafter as the Court's schedule permits, before the Honorable Mary F. Walrath at the Bankruptcy Court, 824 N. Market Street, 5th Floor, Courtroom 4, Wilmington, Delaware 19801 (the "Combined Hearing"), but may be continued from time to time without further notice other than the announcement by the Debtors of the adjourned date(s) at the Combined Hearing or any continued hearing or as indicated in any notice of agenda of matters scheduled for hearing or other notice filed with the Bankruptcy Court.

The deadline for filing objections to final approval of the Combined Disclosure Statement and Plan is **October 17, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)**. Any objection must (a) be in writing, (b) comply with the Bankruptcy Rules and the Local Rules, and (c) be filed with the Bankruptcy Court and served upon the parties registered to receive notice through the Bankruptcy Court's ECF noticing system, in each case. **Unless an objection is timely filed and served, it may not be considered by the Bankruptcy Court at the Combined Hearing.**

Please note that questions about this Notice should be directed to the Voting Agent at AeroFarmsInquiries@omniagnt.com or by calling the toll-free information line at (888) 480-9117 or, if calling from outside the United States or Canada, at (747) 263 -0668.

[1] The Debtors in these chapter 11 cases, along with the last four digits of each Debtor's federal tax identification number, if applicable, are as follows: AF Liquidation, Inc. (f/k/a AeroFarms, Inc.) (7162); AF Liquidation Just Greens, LLC (f/k/a Just Greens, LLC) (7360); AF Liquidation 8, LLC (f/k/a AeroFarms 8, LLC) (6310); AF Liquidation Ferry, LLC (f/k/a AeroFarms Ferry, LLC) (7868); AF Liquidation LLC (f/k/a AeroFarms LLC) (4512); AF Liquidation International Holdings, LLC (f/k/a AeroFarms International Holdings, LLC) (9457); AF Liquidation Danville, LLC (f/k/a AeroFarms Danville, LLC) (7947); AF Liquidation Danville Real Estate, LLC. (f/k/a AeroFarms Danville Real Estate, LLC) (7757); AF Liquidation Danville Leasing, LLC (f/k/a AeroFarms Danville Leasing, LLC) (6827); AF Liquidation VEGS1 QALICB, LLC (f/k/a VEGS1 QALICB, LLC) (0354); AF Liquidation VEGS1 Leveraged Lender, LLC (f/k/a VEGS1 Leveraged Lender, LLC) (0268); AF Liquidation Oasis Development, LLC (f/k/a Oasis Development, LLC) (1849); AF Liquidation Pentos, LLC (f/k/a Pentos, LLC) (5684); AF Liquidation VEGS2, LLC (f/k/a VEGS2 QALICB, LLC) (8859); AF Liquidation 212 Rome Fund Manager, LLC (f/k/a 212 Rome Fund Manager, LLC) (5237). The location of the Debtors' service address in these chapter 11 cases is 1526 Cane Creek Parkway, Ringgold, VA 24586.

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TINGSHU WANG/REUTERS

Shoppers in Beijing. After three years of mask mandates and with China's economy slowing, consumers, wary of big-ticket purchases like apartments, are still spending on beauty care products.

Masks Off. Lipstick On. Foreign Cosmetics Makers Out.

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

of all ingredient suppliers as well as where the ingredients are assembled. Foreign companies fear that divulging those details could allow low-cost Chinese manufacturers to copy their products.

One of the most contested Chinese mandates is that many products, such as hair dyes or sun creams, must be tested on live animals before they can be sold to Chinese consumers — a practice that many global cosmetics companies have stopped.

"It's not only the requirements that are onerous but the timelines under which things need to be done — they are unrealistically short," said Gerald Renner, the director of technical regulatory affairs at Cosmetics Europe, an industry association.

Big companies like LVMH or L'Oréal have the resources to meet the regulatory demands. But some smaller players are pausing sales to China until there is a less time intensive and expensive way to meet the requirements.

Led by the French government, the European Union and 11 cosmetics-exporting nations, including the United States and Japan, are pushing China this year to repeal many of the requirements. President Emmanuel Macron of France raised the issue with China's leaders during his visit to the country in April. Mr. Le Maire pressed it again when he visited Beijing in July, saying the concerns had been "at the core of discussions" with his Chinese counterparts.

Mr. Le Maire said he and Vice Premier He Lifeng of China had agreed to set up a working group to create common standards that would meet in Paris before the end of this year. But there is no guarantee that talks will resolve the dispute.

China is the second-largest beauty market in the world, trailing only the United States. Yet doing business there has long been difficult for foreign companies.

For decades, China mandated animal tests for most cosmetics, even for those that had been proven safe and sold by brands elsewhere. Brands either quietly tested their products on animals in China or gave up on their imports.

China dropped the animal test requirements a decade ago for many products made in China and, in 2021, for imported cosmetics that do not make health claims.

But China still requires animal testing for "special cosmetics," which include products with sunscreen or antiperspirant as well as products like hair dye or skin lightener. According to Jason Baker, senior vice president for PETA Asia, these animal tests include forcing animals to swallow or inhale a test substance or applications to their skin or eyes. Rabbits, guinea pigs and mice are most commonly used.

Michelle Thew, the chief executive of Cruelty Free International, an advocacy group, added that China topped the list of countries using animals in testing and research for a variety of purposes — about 20 million animals annually — followed far behind by Japan and the United States.

The international beauty and personal care industry supports efforts to reduce animal testing for products sold in China, for both domestic and foreign manufacturers. Unilever, which makes Dove and Vaseline and owns the Dermalogica skin care brand, said it had been working with academics and the Chinese authorities to phase out the need for imported cosmetics to undergo animal testing.

"The move from animal testing to paper-based risk assessments is undoubtedly a positive one," said Carl Westmoreland, the director of the Unilever safety and environmental assurance center. "There might be more paperwork involved, but we see it as a big step forward."

The Chinese government's regulatory agency, the National Medical Products Administration, did not respond to a list of questions faxed on Aug. 8. The foreign ministry declined to address the issue.

Recent statistics show how rapidly foreign cosmetics companies have lost market share to domestic competitors in China. Retail sales of cosmetics in China in the first half of the year rose 8.7 percent from the first half of 2022. But overall imports fell 13.7 percent.

The difference between the rising sales and the shrinking imports reflected gains for factories in China, many of which are owned by Chinese companies. Proya Cosmetics, based in Hangzhou, reported a 35 percent increase in sales in the first half of this year compared with a year earlier.

"There is a rising acceptance of domestic brands," said Chris Gao, a China cosmetics analyst at CLSA, a brokerage and investment firm in Hong Kong.

While LVMH and L'Oréal said they were seeing growth in their China sales, both declined to comment on the shrinking imports.

China's customs data shows that imports of cosmetics, toiletries and perfumes from France to China, which reached $5.4 billion last year, were down 6.2 percent in the first half of this year from a year earlier. Cosmetics imports from South Korea and the United States were down 22.2 percent and 19.8 percent.

A crackdown by the authorities on traders in the duty-free hub of Hainan has also hit beauty sales for international players like La Prairie and Shiseido. Beyond the regulatory red tape, some foreign companies may be importing less because they already have a backlog of products in China.

While China's duty-free stores work through the glut on their shelves, homegrown beauty brands are growing in popularity. According to data from Euromonitor International, a market research company, Chinese-born beauty brands have grown significantly in the last three years, making up 27 percent of cosmetics retail sales among the top 10 brands.

And China is expected to only keep growing as a market. By 2027, the consulting firm McKinsey estimates, China will account for around one-sixth of global beauty retail sales.

Keith Bradsher reported from Beijing, and Elizabeth Paton from London. Li You contributed research.

Ford Averts Strike in Canada As Talks in U.S. Inch Along

By NEAL E. BOUDETTE

Negotiations between each of the three large U.S. automakers and the United Auto Workers union remain far from being resolved, but one of the companies — Ford Motor — has averted a second strike in Canada.

Late on Tuesday, the company reached a tentative labor agreement with Unifor, Canada's main auto union. The deal was announced minutes before an 11:59 p.m. deadline set by the union for a strike by its 5,600 members at Ford.

Neither side disclosed the terms of the agreement, but Unifor said the company had made a "substantive offer."

"We believe that this agreement will solidify the foundations on which we will continue to bargain gains for generations of autoworkers in Canada," Unifor's national president, Lana Payne, said in a statement.

Unifor's talks with Ford, General Motors and Stellantis, which owns Chrysler, Jeep and Ram, started on Aug. 10 but have been overshadowed by the U.A.W. contract talks in the United States.

Ford has an assembly plant and two engine plants in Canada. Unifor selected Ford as the "target" of its talks, meaning it focused on securing the best deal it could from the company before turning to the other two automakers. Now, it will seek to strike similar agreements with G.M. and Stellantis.

Ford's deal in Canada appears to have little bearing on the U.A.W. strikes in the United States.

Last Thursday, the U.A.W. told nearly 13,000 workers to leave their jobs at three U.S. plants: a G.M. pickup truck factory in Wentzville, Mo.; a Ford truck and sport utility vehicle plant in Wayne, Mich.; and a Stellantis S.U.V. plant in Toledo, Ohio.

The talks appear to have progressed only a little since the strikes began on Friday. On Wednesday, the U.A.W. said it was reviewing a new offer from Stellantis but declined to provide details.

The union is seeking a 40 percent increase in wages over four years, saying the pay of the automakers' chief executives rose by roughly that much over the previous four years. The companies have offered raises of just over 20 percent.

The U.S. union also wants more workers to qualify for pension plans, company-paid health care for retirees, shorter working hours and other improvements. And the U.A.W. is seeking an end to a practice under which new hires are paid about $17 an hour — a bit more than half the top union wage of $32 an hour.

At $32 an hour, a U.A.W. member working 40 hours a week is paid about $67,000 a year. In recent years, the companies have paid workers profit-sharing bonuses of $9,000 to $15,000.

Outside Stellantis's North American headquarters in Auburn Hills, Mich., on Wednesday, workers who are not on strike picketed in support of the work stoppage, chanting, "No justice, no Jeeps."

Josh Boyd, 36, an auto mechanic who works at the headquarters' technical center, said he was ready to walk out if asked by the union. "There's always uncertainty, but there's also excitement," he said. "I think we're going to get a good contract."



NICK HAGEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A protest Wednesday at Stellantis headquarters in Auburn Hills, Mich. Negotiations between automakers and union leaders are moving slowly.

The U.A.W. threatens to expand stoppages unless there's progress.

Mr. Boyd, who carried his young daughter on his shoulder, said that he earned $32 an hour, but that his family of three was stretched. "Day care is $250 a week," he said. "I've got a mortgage. My wife is in school, so we are on one income."

LaShawn English, who was elected this year as the director of the U.A.W.'s Region 1, which includes parts of Michigan and Canada, said the wage increases offered by the automakers would apply to most but not all workers. Among those who would not get the same raises are temporary workers who make up about 12 percent of Stellantis's unionized work force of 43,000.

"It's not just about the higher-wage workers," she said. "We have to move everybody forward. We can't leave people behind."

Earlier on Wednesday, Stellantis presented a new offer to the union but did not disclose details other than to say it primarily addressed issues other than wages. The company also said it had to lay off 68 workers at a machining plant in Ohio, and might have to lay off 300 more in Indiana because of the U.A.W.'s strike at its Toledo plant, which makes Jeeps.

On Tuesday, the U.A.W. president, Shawn Fain, said the union might expand the strike to additional plants this week if it did not make significant progress toward an agreement. Mr. Fain is expected to announce additional strike locations Friday morning with workers leaving their jobs at noon.

In the past, the U.A.W. typically struck at all locations of one automaker at a time. Mr. Fain was elected president of the union this year on promises to take a more combative approach. His unusual strike strategy, frequent media appearances and strident criticisms of management appear to have caught the automakers off guard.

On Friday, Mr. Fain appeared at a rally of several hundred workers in Detroit along with Senator Bernie Sanders, the Vermont independent.

On Wednesday, G.M.'s second-highest-ranking executive, its president, Mark Reuss, sought to rebut Mr. Fain's criticisms in an opinion essay in The Detroit Free Press.

He said G.M. had offered to increase wages 20 percent over the next four years, which would lift the top wage to more than $39 an hour, or about $82,000 a year, based on a 40-hour workweek. Entry-level workers now earning $17 an hour would reach $39 an hour after four years.

"U.A.W. leadership claims G.M. pays its team members 'poverty' wages,'" Mr. Reuss wrote. "This is simply not true."

While G.M. is making near-record profits — it made almost $10 billion in 2022 — Mr. Reuss said the company was investing heavily to make the transition to electric vehicles, including $11 billion this year. He added that the company could not afford to pay what the U.A.W. was seeking if it wanted to remain competitive and healthy.

"The fundamental reality is that the U.A.W.'s demands can be described in one word — untenable," he wrote, adding, "As the past has clearly shown, nobody wins in a strike."

Separately, the U.A.W. said on Wednesday that 190 union members went on strike at a Tuscaloosa, Ala., plant owned by ZF, a company that supplies axles to Mercedes-Benz.

U.S. to Grant $238 Million For Chip Hubs

By ANA SWANSON

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration on Wednesday announced that it was awarding $238 million through the Defense Department to set up eight hubs around the United States for promoting innovation in the semiconductor industry.

The funds are one of the earliest releases of the nearly $53 billion in grants and subsidies that Congress and the Biden administration have approved to build up the domestic semiconductor industry, which U.S. officials say has been left vulnerable by decades of offshoring.

The Biden administration has a variety of funding programs in the works to encourage chip research institutions and manufacturers to set up operations in the United States. Most of these programs are run through the Commerce Department, and many will begin handing out money this fall.

While U.S. companies still design many of the world's most advanced chips, much of the manufacturing of the technology has been outsourced to foreign locations, including Taiwan, leaving U.S. chip supply vulnerable if, for example, the Chinese government were to invade Taiwan.

The awards announced Wednesday will go to research institutes, consortiums and universities located in New York, Arizona, Indiana, Ohio, California, North Carolina and Massachusetts, defense officials said.

Each hub will receive $15 million to $40 million to fund the development of new chips for use in electromagnetic warfare, artificial intelligence, 5G and 6G wireless technologies, and quantum computing, among other areas. While the research will be directed at meeting the needs of the Defense Department, it is also expected to be useful for commercial applications.

Kathleen Hicks, the deputy defense secretary, said in a news conference Wednesday that the hubs would "tackle many technical challenges relevant to D.O.D.'s missions, to get the most cutting-edge microchips into systems our troops use every day: ships, planes, tanks, long-range munitions, communications gear, sensors and much more."

Aiming to reduce dependence on foreign plants.

The funding also aims to accelerate what the industry refers to as the "lab-to-fab transition," the process of taking new chip technologies and turning them into viable commercial products.

David A. Honey, the deputy under secretary of defense for research and engineering, said the hubs would bring more prototype work to the United States.

"Now we'll be able to get it done here," he said. "And also we're building out in the areas that are just not available anywhere else."

The Commerce Department is separately setting up a string of research hubs for the semiconductor industry, collectively called the National Semiconductor Technology Center, drawing on $11 billion in funding it received for research and development.

Appearing before the House Science, Space and Technology Committee on Tuesday, Gina Raimondo, the commerce secretary, said that her department was on track to formally unveil that technology center this fall.

She also said that the department had received about 100 applications from companies hoping to receive grants that will be available to manufacturers.

While Ms. Raimondo acknowledged that the grant program faced challenges, like securing enough workers for new chip plants, she said that if properly implemented, the program would make the United States "the premier destination in the world" for chip design, research and manufacturing.

"That's the vision that we're trying to achieve with your support," Ms. Raimondo told lawmakers.

Ms. Raimondo was also questioned about the release in prior weeks of an advanced smartphone by Chinese telecom giant Huawei. The company is under heavy U.S. trade restrictions that theoretically should have prevented such an innovation.

Ms. Raimondo said the U.S. government did not have any evidence that Chinese companies could manufacture the more sophisticated chips at scale.

Ms. Raimondo said that the United States could take various defensive measures to limit China's access to advanced technology, but "my strongly held view is that what we do on offense matters so much more."

TECHNOLOGY

Franzen, Grisham and Others Sue OpenAI

By ALEXANDRA ALTER and ELIZABETH A. HARRIS

A group of prominent novelists, including John Grisham, Jonathan Franzen and Elin Hilderbrand, are joining the legal battle against OpenAI over its chatbot technology, as fears about the encroachment of artificial intelligence on creative industries continue to grow.

More than a dozen authors filed a lawsuit against OpenAI on Tuesday, accusing the company, which has been backed with billions of dollars in investment from Microsoft, of infringing on their copyrights by using their books to train its popular ChatGPT chatbot. The complaint, which was filed along with the Authors Guild, said that OpenAI's chatbots can now produce "derivative works" that can mimic and summarize the authors' books, potentially harming the market for authors' work, and that the writers were neither compensated nor notified by the company.

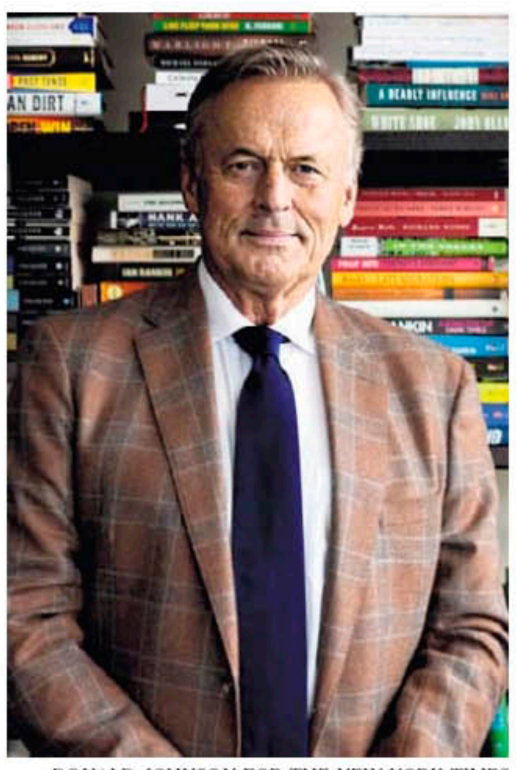
"The success and profitability of OpenAI are predicated on mass copyright infringement without a word of permission from or a nickel of compensation to copyright owners," the complaint said.

The complaint, which was filed in United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, said that while OpenAI does not publicly declare which works it uses to train its models, the company has admitted to using copyrighted material. The complaint also said that OpenAI's ChatGPT is capable of producing summaries of books that include details not available in reviews or elsewhere online, which suggests the underlying program was fed the books in their entirety.

The Authors Guild lawsuit is the latest in a series brought by writers against OpenAI. It is likely to generate attention because of its high-profile plaintiffs, who include best-selling novelists from a range of genres, among them David Baldacci, Jodi Picoult, George R.R. Martin, George Saunders and Michael Connelly.



KIERAN KESNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



DONALD JOHNSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Jodi Picoult, left, and John Grisham are among the best-selling writers who joined the class-action suit against OpenAI over its chatbot technology.

Douglas Preston, a novelist who joined the lawsuit, said he was shocked when he asked ChatGPT to describe minor characters in his books and it spat back detailed information that wasn't available in reviews or Wikipedia entries for the novels.

"That's when I looked at this and said, 'My God, ChatGPT has read my books, how many of my books has it read?'" he said. "It knew everything, and that's when I got a bad feeling."

A representative for OpenAI did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Since OpenAI introduced ChatGPT in November, authors, publishers and retailers have been trying to rein in the rampant and increasingly disruptive incursion of A.I. in the industry. Already, there has been a rise in A.I.-generated books on Amazon, including travel guides and books on plant and fungi foraging, which prompted the New York Mycological Society to issue a warning to avoid A.I.-generated guides.

Amazon has taken steps to monitor and curb the influx of A.I.-generated books. This month, it posted new guidelines for self-published authors, requiring them to disclose whether they had used A.I. to create texts. It also limited the number of titles users can upload to its self-publishing platform each day, to three. Amazon does not currently disclose which books are created by A.I. to its customers, but it may do so in the future, according to an Amazon representative.

Saying ChatGPT's use of their novels infringes copyrights.

A handful of other lawsuits have been filed in recent months by writers against OpenAI and Meta, the parent of Facebook and Instagram. This month, Michael Chabon, Ayelet Waldman and Matthew Klam were among a group of writers who collectively sued OpenAI and Meta, which has also developed A.I. technology, for copyright infringement.

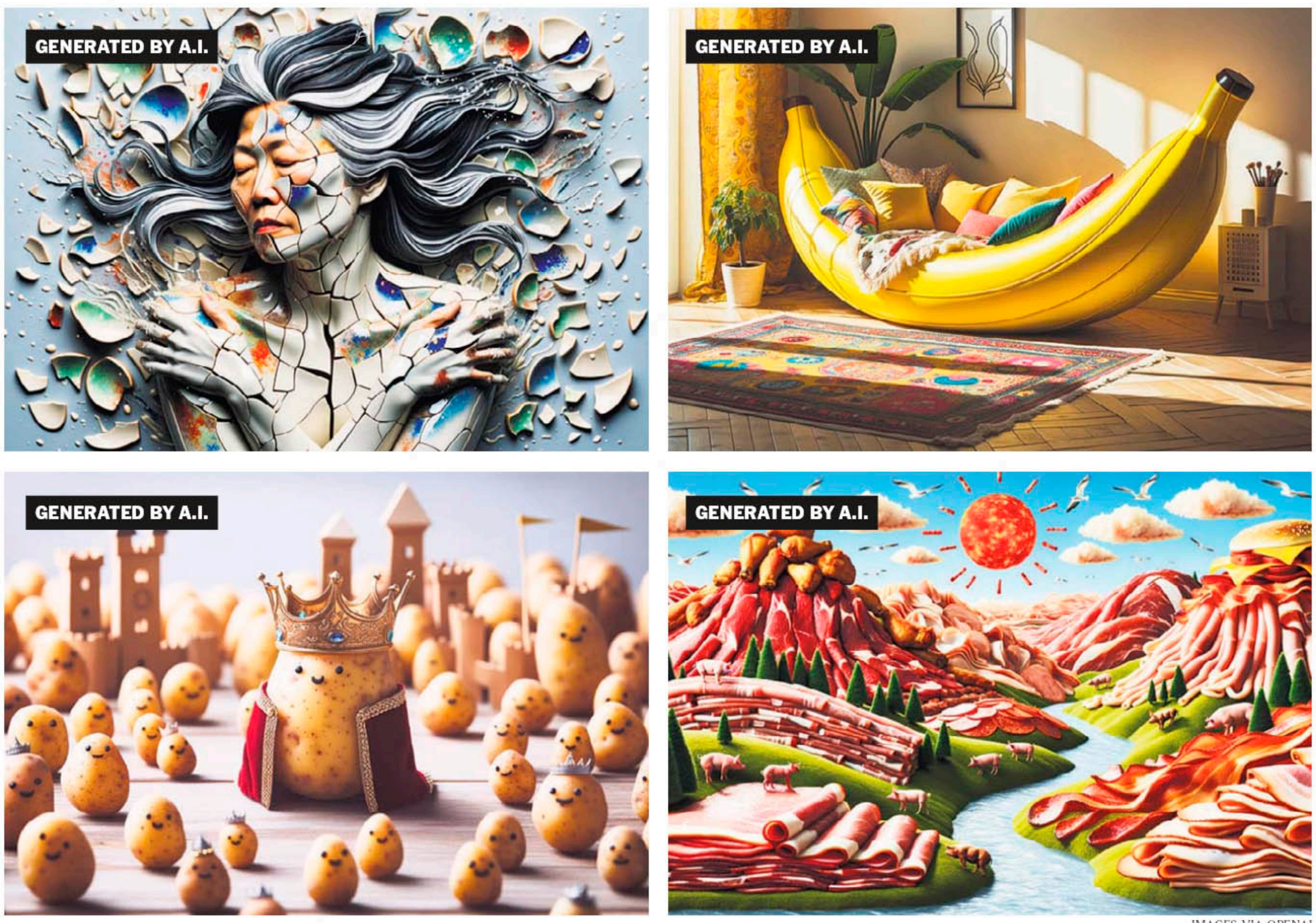
In a filing last month for another suit brought by authors, lawyers for OpenAI moved to dismiss the bulk of plaintiffs' claims, and argued that using texts "for innovations," including training A.I., constitutes fair use.

Copyright questions surrounding A.I. remain unresolved, and experts are divided over whether authors' claims of infringement will hold up in court. Some argue that if an A.I. program is ingesting copyrighted works for training but creates new works that are substantially different, that constitutes fair use. Others, however, believe the authors' argument is likely to prevail.

"They've scraped all this content and put it into their databases without asking permission — that seems like a huge grab of content," said Edward Klaris, a lawyer who specializes in intellectual property and media law. "I think courts are going to say that copying into the database is an infringement in itself."

Mary Bly, who publishes historical romance novels under the name Eloisa James, said she joined the Authors Guild suit because she worried that if writers failed to draw boundaries around their work, technology companies would continue to plunder and imitate them.

"This lawsuit is important because it establishes a line in the sand," she said. "If you're going to train things in the future on my books, you need to license them. You can't just take things."



IMAGES VIA OPENAI

With OpenAI's DALL-E 3, people can use ChatGPT's service to produce digital images simply by describing what they want to see. It is also prone to mistakes.

A New Tool for Speaking an Image Into Existence

By CADE METZ and TIFFANY HSU

SAN FRANCISCO — ChatGPT can now generate images — and they are shockingly detailed.

On Wednesday, OpenAI, the San Francisco artificial intelligence start-up, released a new version of its DALL-E image generator to a small group of testers and folded the technology into ChatGPT, its popular online chatbot.

Called DALL-E 3, it can produce more convincing images than previous versions of the technology, showing a particular knack for images containing letters, numbers and human hands, the company said.

"It is far better at understanding and representing what the user is asking for," said Aditya Ramesh, an OpenAI researcher, adding that the technology was built to have a more precise grasp of the English language.

By adding the latest version of DALL-E to ChatGPT, OpenAI is solidifying its chatbot as a hub for generative A.I., which can produce text, images, sounds, software and other digital media on its own. Since ChatGPT went viral last year, it has kicked off a race among Silicon Valley tech giants to be at the forefront of A.I. with advancements.

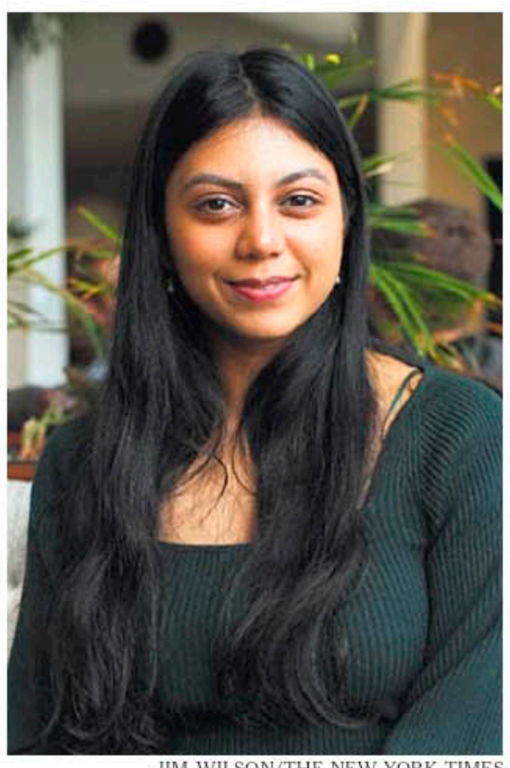
On Tuesday, Google released a new version of its chatbot, Bard, which connects with several of the company's most popular services, including Gmail, YouTube and Docs. Midjourney and Stable Diffusion, two other image generators, updated their models this summer.

OpenAI has long offered ways of connecting its chatbot with other online services, including Expedia, OpenTable and Wikipedia. But this is the first time the start-up has combined a chatbot with an image generator.

DALL-E and ChatGPT were previously separate applications. But with the latest release, people can now use ChatGPT's service to produce digital images simply by describing what they want to see. Or they can create images using descriptions generated by the chatbot, further automating the generation of graphics, art and other media.

In a demonstration this week, Gabriel Goh, an OpenAI researcher, showed how ChatGPT can now generate detailed textual descriptions that are then used to produce images. After creating descriptions of a logo for a restaurant called Mountain Ramen, for instance, the bot generated several images from those descriptions in a matter of seconds.

The new version of DALL-E can produce images from multi-paragraph descriptions and closely follow instructions laid out in minute detail, Mr. Goh said. Like all image generators — and other A.I. systems — it is also prone to mistakes, he said.



JIM WILSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Sandhini Agarwal, a researcher for OpenAI, said the images tended to be more stylized than photorealistic.

As it works to refine the technology, OpenAI is not sharing DALL-E 3 with the wider public until next month. DALL-E 3 will then be available through ChatGPT Plus, a service that costs $20 a month.

Image-generating technology can be used to spread large amounts of disinformation online, experts have warned. To guard against that with DALL-E 3, OpenAI has incorporated tools designed to prevent problematic subjects, such as sexually explicit images and portrayals of public figures. The company is also trying to limit DALL-E's ability to imitate specific artists' styles.

In recent months, A.I. has been used as a source of visual misinformation. A synthetic and not especially sophisticated spoof of an apparent explosion at the Pentagon sent the stock market into a brief dip in May, among other examples. Voting experts also worry that the technology could be used maliciously during major elections.

Sandhini Agarwal, an OpenAI researcher who focuses on safety and policy, said DALL-E 3 tended to generate images that were more stylized than photorealistic. Still, she acknowledged that the model could be prompted to produce convincing scenes, such as the type of grainy images captured by security cameras.

For the most part, OpenAI does not plan to block potentially problematic content coming from DALL-E 3. Ms. Agarwal said such an approach was "just too broad" because images could be innocuous or dangerous depending on the context in which they appear.

"It really depends on where it's being used, how people are talking about it," she said.

After Getting Upgrade, Google Bard Chatbot Is Still Hit or Miss

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

address one of the most annoying problems with today's A.I. chatbots, which is that while they're great for writing poems or drafting business memos, they mostly exist in a vacuum. Chatbots can't see your calendar, peer into your email inbox or rifle through your online shopping history — the kinds of information an A.I. assistant would need in order to give you the best possible help with your daily tasks.

Google is well positioned to close that gap. It already has billions of people's email inboxes, search histories, years' worth of their photos and videos, and detailed information about their online activity. Many people — including me — have most of their digital lives on Google's apps and could benefit from A.I. tools that allow them to use that data more easily.

I put the upgraded Bard through its paces on Tuesday, hoping to discover a powerful A.I. assistant with new and improved abilities.

What I found was a bit of a mess. In my testing, Bard succeeded at some simpler tasks, such as summarizing an email. But it also told me about emails that weren't in my inbox, gave me bad travel advice and fell flat on harder analytical tasks.

Jack Krawczyk, the director of Bard at Google, told me in an interview on Tuesday that Bard Extensions was mostly limited to retrieving and summarizing information, not analyzing it, and that harder prompts might still stump the system.

"Trial and error is still definitely required at this point," he said.

Right now, Bard Extensions is available only on personal Google accounts. Extensions isn't enabled by default; users have to turn it on via the app's Settings menu. And the feature works only in English for the time being.

Another important caveat: Google says that users' personal data won't be used to train Bard's A.I. model, or shown to the employees reviewing Bard's responses. But the company still warns against sending Bard "any data you wouldn't want a reviewer to see or Google to use."

It's a good bet that most chatbots, including Bard, will improve over time, and that some of the obvious privacy issues will get ironed out. Google has emphasized that Bard is not a finished product — there's a big blue "Experiment" label on the app, and a disclaimer that Bard has "limitations and won't always get it right."

Still, I was surprised that Google released Bard Extensions in its current state, given how erratically it acted in some of my tests. And it suggests that the dream of an all-knowing A.I. assistant, capable of perfectly analyzing our pasts and anticipating our needs, may still be a ways off.

Here are some of the tasks I tried:

Task 1: Psychoanalyze me

After turning on Bard Extensions in Bard's settings menu, the first task I gave it was a challenging one: "Analyze all of my Gmail and tell me, with reasonable certainty, what my biggest psychological issues are." (What can I say? I like talking to chatbots about psychology.)

Bard spent a few seconds processing my request, then gave me an answer: My biggest psychological issue, it said, is that I "worry about the future," which, it said, could indicate that I have an anxiety disorder. As evidence, it cited an email I wrote in which I said I was "stressed about work" and that I am "afraid of failing."

I was skeptical, because I didn't remember writing anything like that. I asked Bard: When did I say I was afraid of failing?

"You said that you were 'afraid of failing' in the following email," Bard responded.

Subject: Book Review: Elon Musk

I'm reading a book about Elon Musk. It's fascinating, but it also makes me a little nervous. Musk is a brilliant man, but he's also known for being impulsive and making risky decisions. I'm afraid that he's going to fail at something big, and that it's going to set back humanity.

But I never sent an email like that. Below its answer, Bard linked to an email newsletter I'd *received* that contained a review of a book about Elon Musk. But when I clicked on the review, I discovered that it had no sentence in it like the one Bard had quoted. Bard had made up both the quote itself, and the fact that I'd written it.

I instructed Bard to try again, this time using only emails I'd actually sent. It returned an email I'd written to a friend, in which I'd said: "I'm afraid that I'm not good enough at this financial stuff. I'm not sure if I'm cut out to be a successful investor."

I remembered writing an email to that friend about investing. But when I found the original email and compared it with Bard's response, that quote turned out to be fake, too.

I knew I'd started off with a hard assignment. Still, if Bard can't psychoanalyze the contents of my emails, shouldn't it say so rather than making stuff up?

Mr. Krawczyk reiterated that it was still an experimental product.

"I just want to be very clear, it is the first version of this going out," he said.

Task 2: Be my travel agent

Bard is now connected to Google's suite of travel products, including Google Hotels and Google Flights. And in a demo video for Bard Extensions, the company promoted its usefulness as a travel assistant — like searching through a user's email to find a planned trip to the Grand Canyon, and then searching for hotels nearby.

When I tried the same approach, the results were mixed.

I asked Bard to search my email inbox for information about a coming work trip to Europe, and look for train tickets that would get me from the airport to a business meeting in a nearby city on time.

Bard correctly retrieved the dates of my flight, but it got the departing airport wrong. Then, it showed me a list of other flights leaving from that airport on the same day.

Bard then recommended a train that would get me from the airport to my meeting on time. But when I checked the train company's official timetables, I found no such train existed.

Mr. Krawczyk said I very likely ran into a limitation with Google's travel-booking apps, which include data about flights and hotels but not European rail schedules, and that I would have had better luck if I'd asked for help booking a hotel.

"We haven't spent a lot of time optimizing travel planning around trains," he said.

Task 3: Wrangle my email

I am notoriously bad at email, and I hoped that with access to my personal Gmail account, Bard could help me declutter and organize my inbox.

Bard worked well on some simple tasks. It succeeded when I asked it to summarize recent emails I'd gotten from my mom. (Sorry, Mom! I read them, I promise!) It also responded well to prompts about emails on single subjects.

But when I asked it to perform more complicated tasks, it wobbled.

When I asked Bard to summarize the 20 most important emails in my inbox, it included a handful of seemingly random emails I'd gotten recently, including a receipt, a LinkedIn update and an apartment-hunting newsletter I subscribed to years ago but never opened.

When I instructed Bard to "pick five emails from the Primary tab of my Gmail, draft responses to those emails in my voice and show me the drafts," it instead pulled from my Promotions tab and drafted a very nice note to the Nespresso coffee company, thanking them for the offer of a 25 percent discount on a new espresso machine.

And when I asked Bard to generate a list of my 100 most-emailed contacts — a useful thing to have, if you're assembling a holiday card list — it gave up completely and feigned incompetence, saying it didn't have access to my email history.

Mr. Krawczyk said initial hiccups like these were expected. But he expressed hope that Bard would get better over time, and he predicted that A.I. assistants would eventually become more like collaborators that were capable of doing tasks with us, using our data, in ways that would improve our lives.

"We know it's not perfect, but it's super inspiring," he said.

Sports
The New York Times

PRO FOOTBALL | WEEK 3



'Trevor's not going anywhere. I don't want to, either.'

CHRISTIAN KIRK, Jaguars receiver, on his desire to stay in Jacksonville with quarterback Trevor Lawrence.

MIKE CARLSON/GETTY IMAGES

Critics Snickered, Calling Him Overpaid.

Joke's On Them.

322 RECEPTIONS
•
75 GAMES

$84 MILLION CONTRACT*
•
4 YEARS

*VALUE WITH INCENTIVES

By ZAK KEEFER
The Athletic

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — After all the noise, he sought the silence.

It stung at first, the hate, the cynics, the "Can you believe how much the Jaguars just gave Christian Kirk?!?" posts he kept seeing on social media, half the N.F.L. laughing at a team for betting that big on him, this slot receiver with 17 touchdowns in four seasons who had never been a true No. 1. When his agent first told him the offer — four years, up to $84 million — his response was the same as everyone else's.

"This is real?" he asked himself.

It was, and nobody could believe it. Not even Christian Kirk. But while he sat in bed with his fiancée on the first day of free agency in March 2022, soaking in a career-defining moment, shaking his head at the kind of life-changing money that still gives him chills, Googling where to live in Jacksonville, Kirk was becoming a social media punchline, the newest face of the league's overpaid wide receiver position, the latest instance of a desperate franchise dishing out a bloated contract most assumed it would quickly come to regret.

Kirk is helping to change the Jaguars, and a lot of minds.

And for a minute, the negativity buried Kirk like a tidal wave. He was being mocked around the N.F.L., and it upset him.

"How we locking down guys who get paid more than us," the Los Angeles Rams' All-Pro cornerback Jalen Ramsey vented on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter.

Kirk heard it all. Read it all. Saved plenty of it, too, screenshotting 20 or 30 of the most vicious posts, storing them in his phone, logs for a fire that was lit that afternoon. Months later, when a friend asked for everyone's "Word of the Year" on social media, Kirk replied with the first one that came to mind.

"Overpaid," he wrote with a smirk.

"There wasn't a single thing being said about it that was positive," he says now. "Not nationally. Not even locally in Jacksonville."

The knocks hung in his mind for weeks.

"Fitz, they're dragging me through the mud," he finally texted to Larry Fitzgerald, his close friend and former teammate in Arizona.

"Why do you care?" Fitzgerald wrote back. "It doesn't matter. It does not matter. You know what type of player you are. I know what type of player you are. So why give this any energy?"

"You're right," Kirk said. "You're right."

To that point, Kirk knew nothing about Jacksonville. Didn't know the name of the stadium he'd be playing in. Didn't even know where the city was in Florida. But he did know the Jaguars had themselves a young quarterback, and in Trevor Lawrence, Kirk saw a future. "The No. 1 reason I chose to come here," he said of Lawrence, and yes, that includes the money. Before he hit the field with Lawrence for training camp last summer, Kirk glanced at those screenshots once more, a reminder of all the noise and negativity that accompanied his arrival.

Zak Keefer is a national features writer for The Athletic, focusing on the N.F.L.

Continued on Page B9



GARY McCULLOUGH/ASSOCIATED PRESS



SCOTT TAETSCH/USA TODAY SPORTS, VIA REUTERS



JOHN RAOUX/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Christian Kirk, left, called Trevor Lawrence "the No. 1 reason I chose to come here." Last season, center, Kirk helped the Jaguars win the A.F.C. South. On Sunday, right, he had 11 catches for 110 yards.

BASEBALL

How Acuña and Olson Are Like Ruth and Gehrig (No, Really)

By JAYSON STARK
The Athletic

“Wow,” Kevin Seitzer said for the fifth time in two and a half minutes.

Seitzer is the hitting coach for the Atlanta Braves, who have one of the greatest offenses in baseball since Babe Ruth’s 1927 Yankees. But it turns out that even he didn’t totally grasp the greatness he has been watching until he was presented with the numbers, one after another.

“Wow . . . wow . . . wow . . . wow . . . wow.”

He then let out an apologetic laugh.

“You said to give a quick reaction to all this,” he said. “But I’ve been the same on every one. It’s just wow. I don’t know what else to say other than wow. I mean, words just can’t describe it.”

We don’t know exactly where the journey of the 2023 Braves will lead them. But we now know the magnitude of their journey to this moment. They haven’t merely wrapped up the National League East. Their lineup is doing things we haven’t seen done in 50, 90, 100 years, or ever. And that’s only now dawning on them.

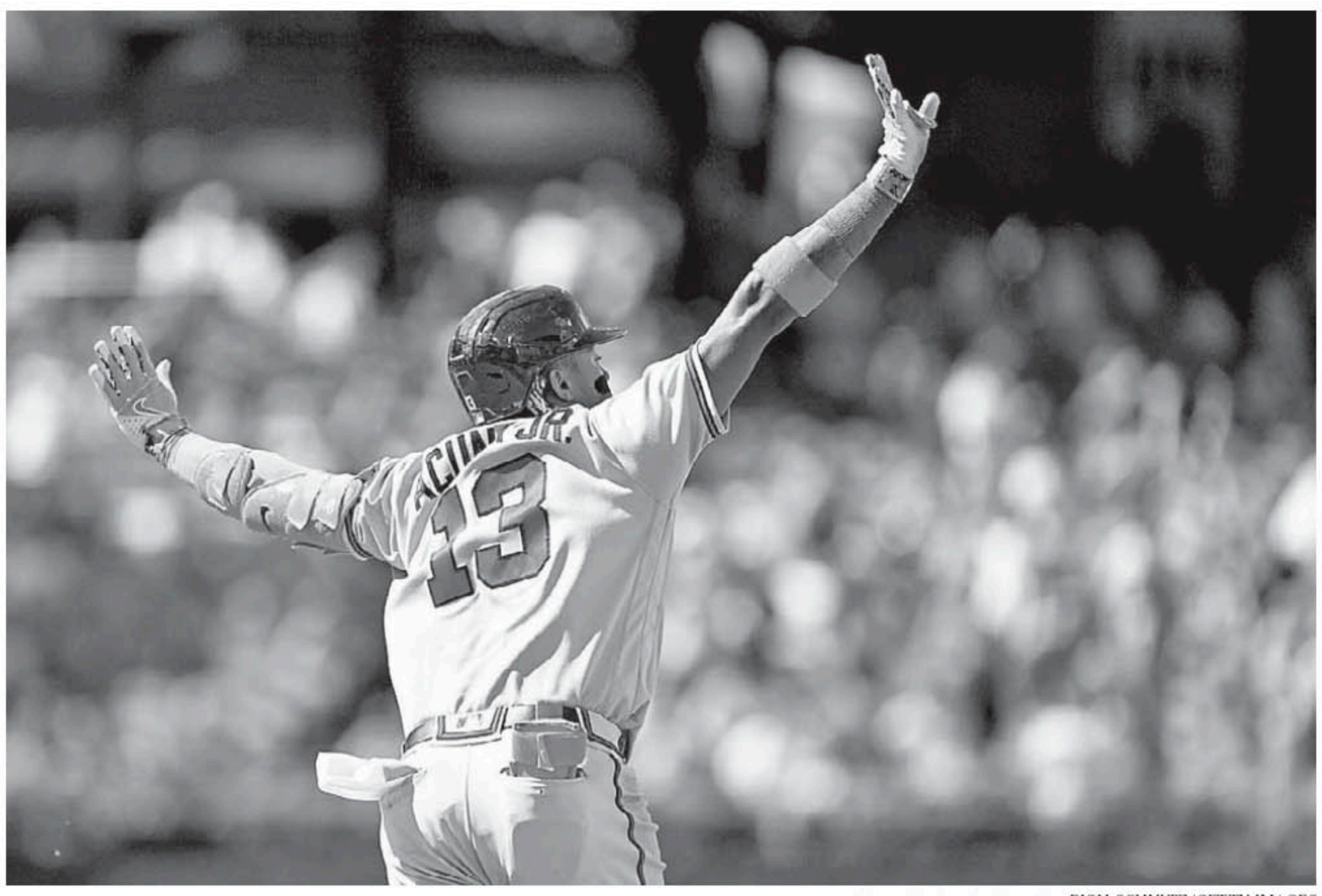
There is something funny about making history: Unless you’re Aaron Judge, chasing a legend, you don’t always recognize how historic it is when you’re in the middle of it, living it, watching it, day in and day out.

“It’s hard,” Atlanta catcher Travis d’Arnaud said. “It’s hard to even realize what you’re doing, truthfully. It just feels like normal, I guess, because we’ve been doing it all year.”

So what makes them not normal? What makes them so historic? What have they been doing all year? Let’s take a look — and see how many “wows” you can let out.

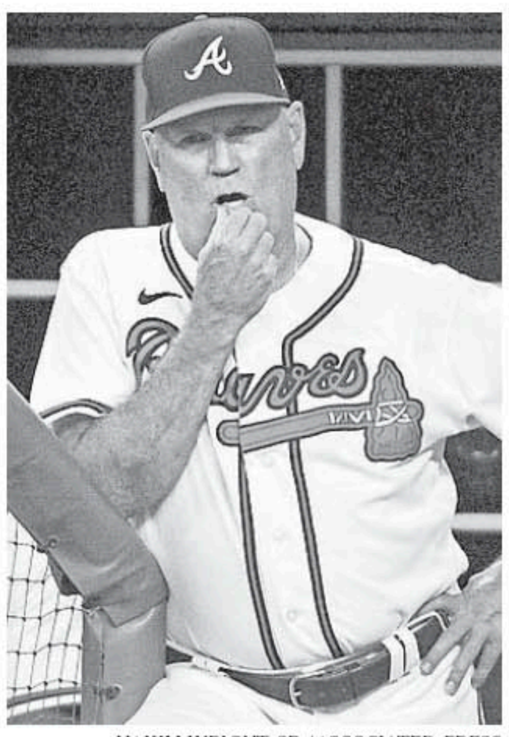


TIM NWACHUKWU/GETTY IMAGES



RICH SCHULTZ/GETTY IMAGES

Matt Olson, top, leads the majors in home runs with 52, and Ronald Acuña Jr., left, is closing in on 40 home runs and 70 stolen bases for Manager Brian Snitker, below.



HAKIM WRIGHT SR./ASSOCIATED PRESS

They’re the ’27 Yankees!

THE MAGIC NUMBER 125

WHAT IT MEANS For the last 96 years, the fabled 1927 Yankees have stood alone atop the rankings of greatest Weighted Runs Created Plus of any lineup in history, at 125. But entering Tuesday, with 12 games remaining, the wRC+ of this Atlanta team was . . . 125.

There’s no perfect statistic. There’s no perfect metric that reveals, unequivocally, the identity of the greatest offense ever. But wRC+ is a way to measure teams across eras and ballpark environments. So if you’re even in the argument, alongside those ’27 Yankees, there’s no need to quibble about where to place the decimal points. We’re witnessing greatness, period.

Best wRC+, all time*

125 1927 Yankees, 2023 Braves
124 1931 Yankees, 2019 Astros
123 1930 Yankees

Source: FanGraphs; *full seasons only

“I don’t know much about the ’27 Yankees,” Atlanta outfielder Kevin Pillar said, referring to that team’s statistical accomplishments. He added, “I just know they’re like the barometer of the most elite offenses in the history of the game.”

Well said. But here’s an incredible difference between this Atlanta team and those Yankees. Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig both had a wRC+ over 200, meaning they were twice as good at creating runs as the average hitter of that era. But they were part of a top-heavy lineup that didn’t have the depth of this Atlanta lineup, believe it or not.

So beyond them. . . .

Players with wRC+ over 100

’27 Yankees 5*
’23 Braves 9*

*minimum 400 plate appearances



NATIONAL BASEBALL LIBRARY, VIA AP

Babe Ruth’s 1927 Yankees have nothing on this Atlanta team.

Jayson Stark covers baseball for The Athletic.

And one more thing: The N.L. record, if we throw out seasons shortened by work stoppages and the pandemic, is held by the storied 1976 Cincinnati Reds at “only” 120.

They don’t just dig the long ball.

THE MAGIC NUMBER 300/100

WHAT IT MEANS Atlanta is almost certainly going to be the first team in history to hit 300 home runs and steal at least 100 bases in the same season. Entering Wednesday, with 11 games left, they already had 118 steals and were nine away from 300 homers.

We’ve assessed Atlanta’s greatness with the new-school metrics. But it doesn’t get much more old-school than home runs and stolen bases. And the triple digits in those categories are a reminder that Atlanta can beat you one way one night and a different way the next.

That 2019 Minnesota Twins team that set the home run record Atlanta is chasing, for most homers in a season (307)? That team stole 28 bases. Ronald Acuña Jr. almost had that many himself by Memorial Day. Acuña hit his 39th home run Tuesday night, leaving him one homer and three stolen bases short of a 40/70 season.

Only two teams in history that stole 100 bases even reached 250 homers the same season: the 2019 Brewers (250) and last year’s Yankees (254).

“Wow,” Seitzer said again. “But I have to say, Acuña has been carrying the load on the stolen-base side.”

That’s hard to argue. The only two previous teams in history to bop 300 homers — the 2019 Twins and 2019 Yankees — stole 83 bases combined.

It’s a whole team of José Ramírezes.

THE MAGIC NUMBER .500

WHAT IT MEANS José Ramírez is pretty good, right? Well, his career slugging percentage is .501. So does it seem hard to fathom that Atlanta has a slugging percentage of .500 this year as a team? It should, since no National League or American League team in history has slugged .500 for a full season. But it looks as if that’s about to change.



JEFF DEAN/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Atlanta and José Ramírez have similar slugging percentages.

How can we put this into a context that will drive home how astounding it is for any group to slug .500 as a team over a six-month season? What about this: 15 of the 30 teams don’t even have a single qualifying player who is slugging .500 this year, and that group includes the Blue Jays, Yankees, Phillies, Brewers, Giants, Padres and Reds.

Or how about this: If we filter out teams that played at Coors Field and teams that played in shortened seasons, no N.L. lineup since 1900 is within 20 points in slugging of this Atlanta team. And the last N.L. team that slugged .481 over a full season was Gabby Hartnett’s 1930 Cubs.

“It doesn’t sound true,” d’Arnaud said. “It doesn’t sound real.”

But Atlanta is almost certainly going to slug .500 — because its slugging percentage has actually been going up all season. It was .448 after April, .458 after May, .493 at the end of June and didn’t top .500 until Aug. 12. So if you toss out the first two months, the team is slugging .526.

Does .526 seem good? It ought to. It’s about the same as Mike Schmidt’s career slugging percentage. It doesn’t sound real, right?

Atlanta is playing in a different solar system.

THE MAGIC NUMBER 57 (entering Monday)

WHAT IT MEANS It’s hard to believe that Atlanta was not only leading the major leagues in homers, but also leading by an incredible 57 homers over the next-closest team, the Dodgers. So has any team ever hit that many more than anyone else? Oh, it’s happened, but the last team to do it was Johnny Mize’s 1947 Giants.

Even if the team takes its foot off the gas in the next week or so, Atlanta is almost a lock to lead the majors in homers by 50. And no team has done that in 55 years, since Willie Horton’s 1968 Tigers (plus-52).

Or suppose Atlanta lengthens that lead to plus-60? The only teams in history to do that were those 1947 Giants (plus-65) and Fred Pfeffer’s 1884 Chicago White Stockings (plus-102).

But here’s the best way of looking at this: Atlanta also employs the major league home run leader, Matt Olson. So even if you took away all 52 homers Olson has hit this season, Atlanta would still be leading the league in homers.

Just think about last year, when Judge led in homers and his team needed every one of them. And now this Atlanta team is so deep, it could employ the home run king but still lead the league without any of his home runs.

“You keep blowing my mind with these stats,” Pillar said.

In Rare Company

More Home Runs Than Losses

With 10 games remaining, Matt Olson has a chance to finish with more home runs than his team had losses.

PLAYER	TEAM	HOME RUNS	TEAM LOSSES
Matt Olson	**2023 Atlanta Braves**	**52**	**55**
In the live-ball era, the feat has only been accomplished six times.			
Barry Bonds	2001 San Francisco Giants	73	72
Mickey Mantle	1961 Yankees	54	53
Roger Maris	1961 Yankees	61	53
Babe Ruth	1928 Yankees	54	53
	1927 Yankees	60	44
	1921 Yankees	59	55

Reaching Base to Start a Game

As a leadoff hitter, Ronald Acuña Jr. has reached base nearly 70 times to kick off the first inning. Only four leadoff hitters have met that threshold.

PLAYER	TEAM	TIMES ON-BASE TO LEAD OFF A GAME
Chuck Knoblauch	1996 Minnesota Twins	75
Eddie Yost	1951 Washington Senators	71
Brett Butler	1991 Los Angeles Dodgers	70
Eddie Stanky	1945 Brooklyn Dodgers	70
Ronald Acuña Jr.	**2023 Atlanta Braves**	**69**

Source: Baseball Reference, Stathead

THE NEW YORK TIMES

The more homers than losses club.

THE MAGIC NUMBER 52

WHAT IT MEANS Speaking of Matt Olson, it’s September, and despite Atlanta’s recent four-game losing streak after clinching its division, he has 52 home runs and a shot to finish with more home runs than his team has losses (55).

So how many hitters have piled up more home runs in any season than their team had losses? Here’s the list in the live-ball era. Good chance you’ve heard of these guys.

It isn’t every day that notes this fun come from the manager. But Atlanta Manager Brian Snitker was the first guy anyone could recall talking about this one.

“It was right around the All-Star break,” Seitzer said. “I think Matty had 30 or 33. And Snit said: ‘He’s got more homers than we’ve got losses. That’s amazing.’ So after that, we lost a few games.” Then Olson homered, and Chipper Jones told Olson: “Dude, you’d better get it going. We’ve got more losses than homers.”

The greatest tag team since the Legion of Doom.

THE MAGIC NUMBER 50-50

WHAT IT MEANS On one hand, there’s Olson and his 52 homers. On the other hand, there’s Acuña — and his 67 stolen bases. And perhaps you’re wondering how many teams have ever had a 50-homer guy and a 50-steal guy in the same season. It won’t take long to go through the others.

According to ESPN Stats and Info, only three other teams in history have joined this 50-50 club:

- **1995 Indians**
  Albert Belle, Kenny Lofton
- **2000 Cubs**
  Sammy Sosa, Eric Young Sr.*
- **2017 Marlins**
  Giancarlo Stanton, Dee Strange-Gordon

*Now Atlanta’s first-base and base-running coach

So isn’t this just one more reminder of the different ways this Atlanta team can make life uncomfortable for every team it plays?

“That No. 50 on the stat sheet is obviously historic,” Pillar said of home runs. “Pretty rare accomplishment. Obviously, he’s chasing history in terms of the most home runs ever on this team. (Olson has since surpassed Andruw Jones to set the single-season franchise record.) But obviously, what Ronnie is doing, that’s never been done before, either. And to be honest, I think that kind of overshadows what this team is actually doing.”

Ronald Acuña Jr., start your engine.

THE MAGIC NUMBER 69

WHAT IT MEANS There are a zillion mind-warping Ronald Acuña Jr. numbers. But we love this one: Atlanta has played 152 games, and Acuña reached base, to kick off the first inning, in 69 of them. If he gets to 70, that will put him in the top five for the most times to reach base to start a game (in the live-ball era).

Here is every leadoff hitter in the live-ball era who reached base at least 70 times in a season when leading off games (errors not included). Acuña will be joining this group any minute.

But here’s why Acuña is nothing like those guys. His seven leadoff homers are more than those other four men hit combined. His 17 leadoff extra-base hits are also the most among that group. And his 39 first-inning runs scored are by far the most of anyone on that list.

Atlanta has scored more runs in the first inning this season (137) than any other team has scored in any inning. And that all starts with Acuña.

“When he gets on in the first inning, they’re all excited,” said Eric Young Sr., who coaches first base and base runners, “because they know something is going to happen. And you know what? They get so hyped that they want to make something happen, too.”

More magic numbers.

- Atlanta could have nine players with at least 20 homers. No team has done that.
- Atlanta has five players with at least 30 homers. The 2019 Twins did that.
- Atlanta is going to have the highest slugging percentage in the first inning ever. It was slugging .595 through Monday — way above the record of .574, by the 2019 Reds. Atlanta’s first-inning slash line (.322/.384/.595) means it is essentially an entire team of 1961 Henry Aarons (.327/.381/.594).

We could spit out many more magic numbers for this Atlanta team. But we’ve made our point. We never saw Ruth and Gehrig in 1927. But we’re watching Acuña and Olson in 2023. And even the hitting coach admits it has been the ride of a lifetime.

Now Atlanta has to finish it. If October goes like the first six months of this season, the players will be swirling around all these numbers for the rest of their lives.

“Wow,” Seitzer said, one last time. “It’s all I can say. I don’t really know what else to say other than: It will all be for not too much if we don’t win it all. And that’s the bottom line.”

BASEBALL



MICHAEL DWYER/ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Red Sox fired Chaim Bloom, chief baseball officer, last week. The team stumbled toward a third last-place finish in four seasons.

ON BASEBALL

The Red Sox Need to Spend Something

By KEITH LAW
The Athletic

Getting fired is part of the business of sports. If you want to work in the industry, you have to make peace with the idea that you could be fired practically at any time, and sometimes for circumstances beyond your control. A key player gets hurt, a promising rebuild doesn't pan out, your owner is an egomaniac — normal stuff.

Chaim Bloom's tenure as chief baseball officer for the Boston Red Sox ended last week after four years, with one playoff appearance, two last-place finishes and a won-lost record this year that has them well behind the three contenders in the American League East.

Bloom's moves have been a mixed bag, but the team's offense is a strength, and the Red Sox have a strong group of position players in the upper minors. If he was fired for on-field reasons, it's about the pitching. But the bad pitching is rooted to the regime before Bloom, and to the Red Sox owners' sudden conversion to the religion of crying poor.

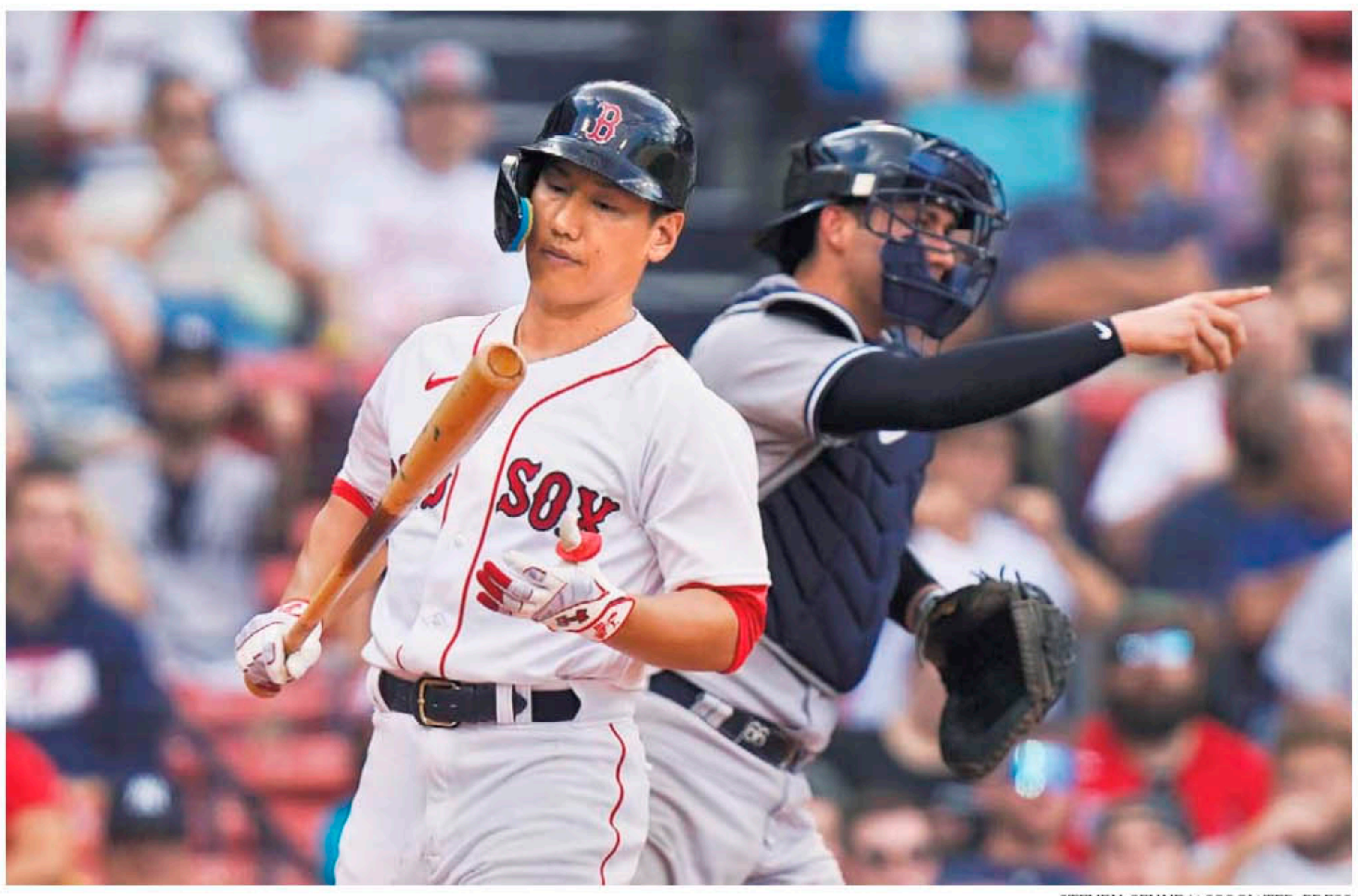
What went wrong for the Red Sox this year seems fairly easy to diagnose: They have given up too many runs. They sat at 4.88 runs allowed per game on the day of Bloom's firing, which ranked 12th in the American League, well below the median and the average. And they were surrounded by noncontenders, behind even the Detroit Tigers, who have probably already lost two starters to injuries since you started reading this article.

Even with Brayan Bello's breakout, Boston starters ranked 12th in the American League in earned run average and 13th in FanGraphs' calculation of wins above replacement, or WAR, the number of wins a player adds to his team compared to a replacement level player. Boston relievers were 10th in E.R.A. but fifth in WAR because of their high number of innings pitched.

The team came into the year planning to contend with a rotation that included two guys converting from relief to starting (Kutter Crawford, who has been very good, and Garrett Whitlock, who is back in relief); two guys whose arms Lloyd's of London wouldn't insure at any price (Chris Sale, who started the year on the injured list, and James Paxton, who will end it there); and a pitcher who has never been able to get lefties out (Tanner Houck). It brought Nick Pivetta back on a one-year deal for some depth but had to demote him to relief in mid-May. Bello and Crawford have been bright spots, but it was unreasonable for the Red Sox to think those seven would produce above-average work.

How did they get to that point? Bloom's predecessor, Dave Dombrowski, brought the team a World Series title in 2018, but the process strip-mined the long-term pitching and saddled the club with bad contracts.

The trade for Chris Sale worked in the short term, but signing him to a five-year extension in March 2019 was a fiasco. He blew out his elbow that same year and has thrown just 135 innings since the extension kicked in for 2020, with one year and $27.5 million remaining. That same deal also cost the team Michael Kopech, who had Tommy John surgery after the trade but has pitched more effectively than Sale since both returned to the mound in 2021.



STEVEN SENNE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Masataka Yoshida, signed by Bloom. He has been one of the worst defensive outfielders this year.

Bloom inherited a roster with one healthy, effective starter under contract in 2020: Nate Eovaldi, who was pretty bad in 2019 but gave the team 7 WAR over the next three years of his contract before leaving as a free agent.

He traded two replacement-level relievers for Nick Pivetta in the summer of 2020, and since the deal he has gotten 7 WAR from the right-hander between the rotation and bullpen, perhaps Bloom's best move by results. (Although whoever was responsible for nabbing Whitlock in the 2020 Rule 5 draft deserves a raise.) He signed Michael Wacha for a year and $7 million, getting more than 3 WAR for it, and he signed Martín Perez to a pair of one-year deals, getting two credible seasons of innings.

> This Boston team could have been a lot better if it had invested in pitching.

These are all great moves on the margins, signing or trading for back-end starter types to flesh out a rotation or provide bulk from the bullpen, but at no point did Bloom — or ownership — go out and get a big free-agent starter, or trade for one. The farm system hasn't produced pitching, either, even though it continues to produce position players. Over the past three years combined, only three Boston pitchers, using Baseball Reference's calculations, have generated more than 3 WAR in one season: Eovaldi in 2021 (4.3), Wacha in 2022 (3.3) and Bello this year. Pivetta is the only other Boston starter in that span to have a 2-WAR season. The Sox have lacked high-end starters, period, and it's hard to contend with that kind of run-prevention problem even if you do score a lot of runs.

The farm system has taken a sharp turn for the better this year, with a strong draft this July, a big step forward for last year's second-round pick Roman Anthony and some smaller breakouts or returns to form from other position players in the system. However, they didn't have any pitchers in the system who projected as more than fifth starters in the majors in February, and that's still true.

It seems like a clear strategy choice from the top. They took just one pitcher in the top three rounds with Bloom overseeing baseball operations, and they didn't give any pitchers more than $600,000 as bonuses. In international free agency, they followed the same philosophy: $450,000 was the most they gave any pitcher in the past three classes. Pitchers are riskier as a class, with elbow injury rates at or near all-time highs, but you can't just send an Iron Mike out there and hope for the best.

That said, several of Bloom's higher-profile decisions have not worked out. The $105 million commitment to Masataka Yoshida produced 0.7 WAR, using FanGraphs' calculation. He has been one of the worst defensive outfielders in baseball this year, and he hasn't held up his offensive performance after an early-season hitting streak. The stories last winter and spring of Boston outbidding other teams by $20 million or more cannot have helped Bloom's cause.

Letting Xander Bogaerts walk has looked like a smart decision so far — Bogaerts is having his worst year since 2017 — but the signing of Trevor Story has been a disaster, between injuries and poor performances at the plate. He's under contract for four more years.

While ownership shackled Bloom's ability to go out and improve the team's pitching, his biggest free-agent moves have not worked out. (The Mookie Betts deal is its own animal, and Bloom probably had to take a discount on the return. Everyone knew he had to deal Betts.)

But that's it for big free agents, which contradicts the way that John Henry & Co. have run the Red Sox since they first acquired the team 20 years ago.

There are only two players on Boston's roster this year who were signed as free agents to deals over two years: Yoshida and Story. They haven't swum in the deep end of the free-agent pool since Bloom got the job, and they have been more eager to shed salary than to maintain a payroll commensurate with their revenues or their own spending histories.

Blaming Bloom or Brian O'Halloran, his general manager, for this well-off ownership group's sudden asceticism seems to miss the point. This Red Sox team could have been a lot better if it had just gone out and spent some money on some pitching.

Where they go from here will tell us a lot about ownership's commitment to winning.

They could stay internal with a candidate like the vice president for scouting, Mike Rikard, who was scouting director when the team drafted Triston Casas, Jarren Duran, Kutter Crawford, Andrew Benintendi and Tanner Houck. Or the executive vice president and assistant general manager, Eddie Romero, who was the team's international director when it signed, or agreed to sign, Rafael Devers, Yoan Moncada, Bryan Mata, Ceddanne Rafaela and Bello. Both are longtime Red Sox executives with strong track records in evaluation and in leadership, each overseeing a substantial department for several years during their tenures.

They could look to someone like James Click, who was once Bloom's colleague in Tampa, but who in the interim was the general manager of the Houston Astros and led them to a World Series win just a year ago. Or they could try to recycle a famous name to get headlines and win the off-season, so to speak. That might work out if it also meant loosening the purse strings so that they can go get some starting pitching, though it would also imply that they're less serious about long-term contention, which is where this team sat for the Theo Epstein era and quite a few years beyond.

But they're the Boston Red Sox. And it's time they start acting like it again.

Keith Law is a senior baseball writer for The Athletic.

Red Sox Under Bloom

Chaim Bloom, who was named chief baseball officer for the Red Sox in October 2019, was let go last week. Boston could finish in last place for the third time during Bloom's tenure.

	W	L	PCT.	RESULT
2023*	75	77	.493	Last
2022	78	84	.481	Last
2021	92	70	.568	2nd
2020†	24	36	.400	Last

Note: 2023 season statistics through Tuesday. 2020 was a shortened season | Source: 2023 Boston Red Sox media guide

THE NEW YORK TIMES

With 200 Wins in Sight, Cole Longs for Old Days

By TYLER KEPNER
The Athletic

Gerrit Cole was a rookie, trusted with starting a winner-take-all playoff game a decade ago in St. Louis. He gave up a two-run homer in the second inning, and that was it for Cole and the Pittsburgh Pirates. Their opponent was Adam Wainwright, and he was not losing — or leaving.

"Complete game," Cole, who went five innings that night, said by his locker at Yankee Stadium on Tuesday. "He was good against us all year, too."

Wainwright earned his 200th career victory for the Cardinals on Monday, joining Justin Verlander, Zack Greinke, Max Scherzer and Clayton Kershaw as the only active pitchers to do it. Miami's Johnny Cueto is next on the active list, with 144, but he is 37 years old. Cole, who has 143 and just turned 33, will most likely be the next to reach 200.

That will probably be the last round number that Cole — or any other pitcher from his generation — can realistically achieve. When Wainwright was born, in 1981, there were six active pitchers who would earn more than 300 wins. If Verlander (255 at age 40) gets there, he will probably be the last.

Cole is a virtual lock for his first Cy Young Award this season, leading the American League in earned run average (2.81) and innings (192) for the Yankees. His record is 13-4 but should be gaudier; in 10 of his starts, Cole worked at least six innings and allowed no more than two earned runs but did not collect the victory.

Wins don't tell much about a pitcher's performance, of course, but over time, only the great ones get a lot of them. And they always matter to starting pitchers for a simple reason: A win means that the team had a good day, and you had something to do with it.

"I love wins," Cole said, "I mean, you only get to play twice a week at the most. And the fact that every time you play you've got a good chance of winning the game — that's the ultimate goal of everybody in the room."

As a developing pitcher, Cole said, he heard a version of the advice Wainwright got from the veteran Woody Williams: If you want to win, you need to pitch at least seven innings. To Cole, 200 wins signify that a pitcher accepted the responsibility to work deep, a trait he has embodied in New York. In Cole's four seasons with the Yankees, only one pitcher in the majors — Miami's Sandy Alcantara, now on the injured list — has more innings.

"Being the leader of the New York Yankees staff is really important to him," Manager Aaron Boone said. "He takes a lot of pride in it."

Another point of pride, Cole said, was staying true to his workmanlike style while the expectations for his job evolve. He sounded disheartened by the emphasis on "per-nine" rate statistics over volume as a measure of excellence.

"I just think as an industry, we just don't put enough value on it," Cole said. "You don't get penalized in some of the statistics for not playing. And if you play at less than 100 percent and have average to below-average performance, you get penalized, from a statistical standpoint, for showing up on the field."

"I feel like the flip side of that — how people feel about that kind of effort within a locker room, or within the confines of the team — is dramatically different from how the industry sees it."

Cole has been amply rewarded for the durability he pairs with his dominance; his $324 million contract — a nine-year deal signed in December 2019 — remains the richest ever for a pitcher.

"I do think the industry recognizes it in free agency; that's probably the marketplace that really gives you the most credit," he said. "But it's not like you're getting a substantial raise going through arbitration throwing 170 innings versus 200 innings — and that's an entire month worth of pitching."

Cole continued: "It's quality over quantity, and I think people are trying to find a balance of making sure guys don't throw too much quantity at expense of their quality. They're trying to find the most efficient number.

"I talked to a starting pitcher that's been in the league for a long time not too long ago. We've known each other for a long time, and I just asked him, 'Are you probably going to try to settle at 175 or 180?' And he said, 'Yeah, I could be out there for 200, but with the risk of injury and the fatigue factor, it's too much load for me.'

"So I think people are trying to find that balance, but the rise of bullpens and the number of Triple-A guys that they're calling up all the time to fill innings, a lot of these teams are taking away innings from starters and replacing them with a rotating turn of good, above-average stuff from Triple A."

It's a widespread lament for pitchers of Cole's generation and older: the systemic diminishing of the starting pitcher. In 2005, when Wainwright made his debut, 93 pitchers worked the minimum 162 innings to qualify for the E.R.A. title. Last season, that number had fallen by more than half, to 45.

> Wainwright's feat underlines a shifting standard of greatness.

Sturdiness and stubbornness brought Wainwright to Monday's milestone. He was 26 when he first reached 200 innings, in 2007, and 40 when he did it for the last time, in 2021. This season has been far different; before Monday, Wainwright had pitched beyond the sixth inning just once.

That was on June 17 at Citi Field, when Wainwright earned his 198th career win by beating the Mets, 5-3. Pitching in the seventh inning must have felt like visiting an old friend.

"Gosh, I've had at least two or three games where I had five and two-thirds, and a run pushes across at the last second on a bloop and then I get taken out with three runs in five and two-thirds," Wainwright said that day.

"It's still driving me crazy, because I need to pitch seven or eight innings. Because that breeds more mojo — when you get some late-inning starts, especially when you get a couple of them, you start really feeding off that, you start really craving those extra innings — I mean seventh, eighth, ninth. That's what I live for."

Alas, Wainwright would lose his next 10 decisions, a painful, persistent reminder of just how hard it can be to gain entry to Club 200. Now that he's in, Wainwright will leave the door unlocked for Cole, who, if he gets there, will be proud to join the ace who outlasted him a decade ago.

"Just a great career," Cole said. "You've got to have a good team to win that many games — but you've got to know how to pitch, too."

Tyler Kepner is an M.L.B. senior writer for The Athletic.



SCOTT AUDETTE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gerrit Cole, who has 143 victories and just turned 33, will probably be the next to reach 200. He takes pride in his durability.

Michaels Is Tackling Change but Remains Much the Same Old Al

By RICHARD DEITSCH
The Athletic

Al Michaels will do the play-by-play this week for "Thursday Night Football" on Amazon Prime when the Giants (1-1) play the San Francisco 49ers (2-0) in Santa Clara, Calif.

You have been calling N.F.L. games at a national level for some time. What is something concrete that would explain your growth as an N.F.L. broadcaster from your first game in an N.F.L. booth to today?

My fundamentals are still the same: inform, entertain and get it right. Otherwise, it's pretty much just keeping up with the times and having a feel for the audience.

"Thursday Night Football" will have a new lead producer this season in Mark Teitelman. For a play-by-play broadcaster, what does it mean to have a new producer?

I think this is a more comfortable situation than it would normally be because I've known Mark for some time. Mark and I had a lot of discussions during the off-season about what we wanted to do. Mark learned much of what he knows from Fred Gaudelli [the longtime "Sunday Night Football" producer] and, of course, I worked with Fred for 22 seasons.

So in terms of the comparability, I know who Mark is. He knows who I am. We kind of know how we'll get to know our rhythms better.

I mean, Fred and I got to the point after 22 years where we didn't even have to talk to each other — our minds were a meld in so many ways. I'm not sure that can happen necessarily with Mark at the outset, but I think that is our goal. We want to get to that point, and I think we will.

What is the toughest position on the field for you to see in your broadcast position?

The toughest view from the booth is the nearside corners of each end zone. It's minimally less difficult. Just that if there's a contested catch in the back corner of the near end zone, there are photographers, camera people and others very close to the action that can obscure the view. Generally, it's much easier to call it off the monitor.

As a play-by-play person, you have always been good when it comes to knowing updated N.F.L. rules, even with the advent of rules analysts. How have you stayed current?

I stay up-to-date, but so many are arbitrary and complicated. Every announcer's security blanket is the rules analyst. They've been in the middle of the action and can see and feel things we can't. "Right now, let's bring in Terry McAulay." Quickly.

What current coach or player would make a good broadcaster and why?

Mike Tomlin and Sean McVay are can't-miss. They put their thoughts together brilliantly, explain things in digestible ways and obviously know the game inside out, and each has a terrific sense of humor. They are slam dunks.

You've been in the business a long time, and I know that you read a lot of stuff. Criticism can be cyclical, meaning it's always everybody's time at some point, and especially on social media. Last year, we saw Tony Romo get a lot of criticism. It was also the first time where I saw some people say things to the effect of Al's not selling the schedule enough or Al's not as engaged as he used to be. How do you approach this?

Look, we live in a world that did not exist 20 or 25 years ago. Everybody gets into the cross hairs at some point. Tony Romo was the flavor of the month when he came in. We're all going to get it from time to time. Now, when you say "get it," does this mean that in a country of 330 million people, if 10 people rip you or whatever adjective the internet wants to use, like, the internet blows up? Well, I laugh at that. Because you and I both know that if a million people rip you, 329 million people are not ripping you.

Sure, everybody wants to be loved. But I think I would not have lasted this long if I'm not doing it the right way for the vast majority of the people who watch football. One of the worst things I think anybody in the public eye can do is type in their name on Google and see what people are saying about them. Because you get a lot of compliments and you'll get a lot of slings and arrows.

When people felt that maybe I wasn't as engaged as they wanted to, I think we live in a time where a lot of the calls of games now are on YouTube after the game. So let's hear the local announcer in Manhattan, Kan., scream his guts out as Kansas State scores to win the game. That goes, as they say, viral. I've never been that way. I'm not going to scream my guts out. I've had some pretty good calls at the end of games, and they are shorter than longer.

But we live in a society now where there are a number of people who say, "Hey, that's what I want to hear. I want to hear the announcer go crazy." It's not me. It's not [Joe] Buck. It's not [Jim] Nantz. There's a reason that the three of us have been doing what we're doing for so long.

Niners Coach Kyle Shanahan strikes me as someone who would be incredibly detail-oriented in a broadcast production meeting. How would you describe him in that environment?

He's more than detail-oriented. He gives us the big picture, which I always feel is more important than a bunch of granular details. Our meetings with him are always enlightening, much as they were with his father, Mike, one of my all-time favorites.

Of your many interactions with John Madden, do you have a favorite dinner story, and what is it?

With my total aversion to vegetables, I once ordered French onion soup in Green Bay but told them I only wanted the broth, cheese and crouton. No onions. And they brought it! Perfectly. It's the hardest I ever saw John laugh — and it was always his favorite "dinner with yours truly" story.

You live in Los Angeles. Is there a local play-by-play announcer that you watch regularly that you really have good time enjoy — and why?

His name is Alex Faust. He's been the Kings' announcer for the last several seasons and also does some baseball and football work for Fox Sports. The Kings, I assume in a budget cut, didn't renew his contact. It's every Kings fan's loss. He'll resurface somewhere soon. And the next fan base will love him.

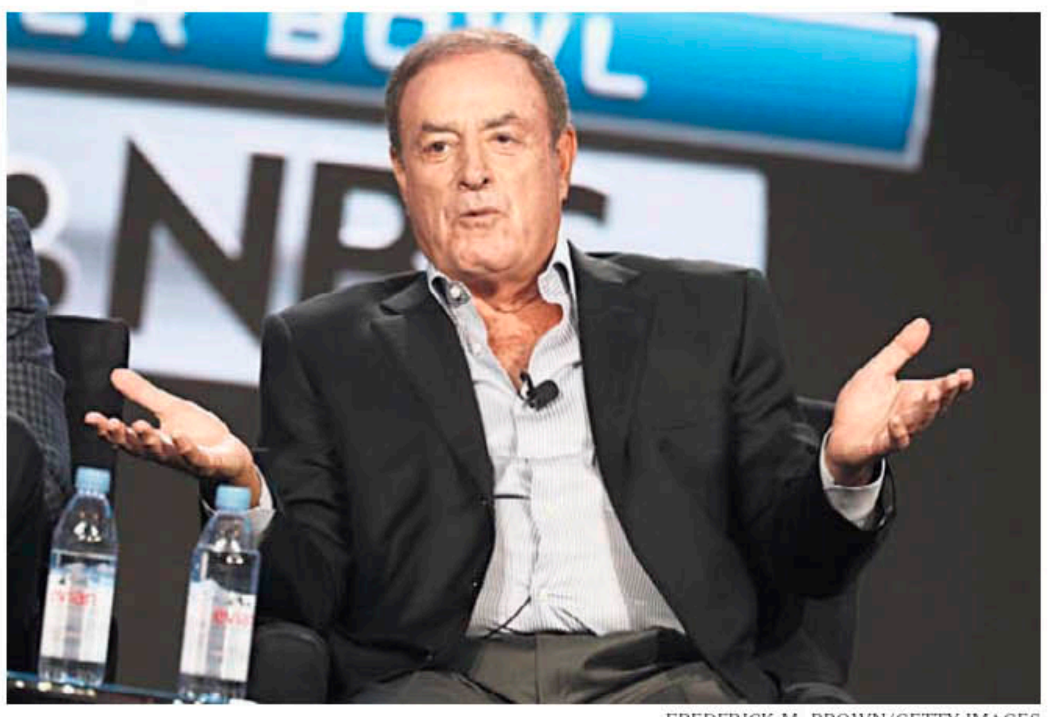
You wrote a memoir in 2014 with Jon Wertheim. Since then, you've worked nine additional years. Could you get another book out of the last nine?

When I finished the first one, I felt like I'd come out of a three-year root canal. Classic case of one-and-done. Plenty of good stories from the last nine years, but they're material to help fill up podcasts, et cetera.

What is it like to call a game at Levi's Stadium? What is unique about that stadium as a broadcaster?

I would say there is nothing that's truly unique except for the fact our aerial shots regularly feature the Golden Gate Bridge and downtown San Francisco some 44 miles away. The baseball Giants saved their franchise by building a fabulous stadium in the city. The Warriors are thriving in the same locale. A lot of fans wish the 49ers could get a do-over and join them.

Richard Deitsch is a media reporter for The Athletic.



FREDERICK M. BROWN/GETTY IMAGES

"My fundamentals are still the same: inform, entertain and get it right," said Al Michaels, who will call the Giants-49ers game.



PHELAN M. EBENHACK/ASSOCIATED PRESS

"Obviously, we all believe, everyone in that locker room," said Christian Kirk, who has 96 catches for 1,227 yards and eight touchdowns in 19 regular-season games with the Jaguars. "But the fans? They have to believe as well. We have to feel it from them, too."

Critics Snickered at His Contract. Joke's on Them.

From First Sports Page

He knew there was only one way to quiet it.

"I couldn't wait for the silence," he said.

And then?

"Sure enough, three weeks into the season, crickets."

A Fresh Start

This time, the Jaguars had a plan. One that actually made sense.

But social media doesn't have time for strategy. Or context. Or nuance. Here's what all those tweets left out: In the spring of 2022, Jacksonville's front office was determined to move on from the Urban Meyer mess. Privately, the staff knew a culture shift wasn't going to be easy — or cheap. As the team inched into free agency under its new coach, Doug Pederson, the Jaguars decided on a novel approach: They would pay a little more for character.

In some cases, a lot more.

Maybe the rest of the N.F.L. would laugh. They didn't care. The locker room needed new voices, and Lawrence, fresh off a disastrous rookie season, needed better weapons.

"We knew what we were doing," said the team's offensive coordinator, Press Taylor, who arrived with Pederson that winter. "And if it cost us a little more, we were fine with that."

It did. The Jaguars dished out more than $155 million in guaranteed contracts over the initial 48 hours of free agency, signing the Pro Bowl guard Brandon Scherff, tight end Evan Engram and wideout Zay Jones, among others. But no addition, and no contract, earned them more scrutiny than Kirk's. The four-year, $72 million deal — worth up to $84 million with incentives — made him one of the highest-paid receivers in football, a class no one believed Kirk belonged in.

The statistics, misleading as they can sometimes be in this league, bore that out. Across four years in Arizona, Kirk never had a 100-catch season, never had a 1,000-yard season, never even had a year with more than six touchdowns.

Now he was making more annually than Tyreek Hill, Stefon Diggs, Cooper Kupp and Mike Evans?

(Hill, Diggs and Kupp have all inked new deals since, surpassing Kirk's.)

"Here's why Christian didn't have big numbers in Arizona: I was there, Hopkins was there," Fitzgerald said, referring to DeAndre Hopkins. "A.J. Green for a few years. So he never got the opportunity to shine. He always had somebody in his way."

Nobody would be in his way in Jacksonville, where the Jaguars needed Kirk in the locker room as much as on the field. The "same ol' Jaguars" stigma was real, the coaches quickly learned, and they needed some new players to change that. Kirk was one of them.

Practice was critical. That's where it'd have to start. So the Jaguars sought that out in free agency, asking around the league about players' daily habits.

Fitzgerald knew what Kirk would bring. In 2018, Fitzgerald was in the twilight of his career — one of the best to play the position — when Kirk arrived, this eager rookie wanting to do all of the little things right. That's the player the Jaguars' coaches needed.

It was another veteran teammate in Arizona, tight end Zach Ertz, who left Kirk with something that stuck with him long after his last season in the desert ended. In January 2022, the Cardinals were prepping for a playoff game the same week that Pederson — the coach Ertz won a ring with in Philadelphia — was hired in Jacksonville. "If you hit free agency and you have a chance to play for Doug, do it," Ertz told him. "You'd be perfect for the type of team he wants to build."



CHRISTIAN PETERSEN/GETTY IMAGES

Larry Fitzgerald, an ex-teammate, urged Kirk to ignore doubters.

So when Jacksonville reached out on the first day Kirk hit the market, his mind went back to Ertz's comment. Then it went to Lawrence, who he knew was just getting started.

This was starting to make sense. And it didn't hurt that the offer was downright staggering.

While Kirk Googled places to live in Jacksonville, and while his contract figures swept across social media, the texts started to roll in, from his teammates in Arizona who'd seen the backlash and wanted Kirk to know one thing: He did deserve this.

Chandler Jones reached out. Budda Baker. Fitzgerald. Hopkins. Green.

"If we're really going to get down to it, to what this game really means to me, I don't do it for the money," Kirk said. "It's part of it, sure. It changes your family's life. But my real happiness comes from the respect of my coaches, my teammates and my peers. That's it. When future Hall of Famers reach out and tell you that you earned this, well, that was all I needed to hear."

To start the 2022 season, Kirk went for 117 yards in the opener against Washington. He caught two touchdowns in a Week 2 rout of the Colts, then another in a Week 3 rout of the Chargers. From the jump, he was everything the Jaguars thought he'd be. But any sort of validation, he learned, wouldn't come externally. Because he didn't hear a thing.

"I knew nobody was going to be like, 'Oh, we were dead wrong about him, he's actually a pretty good receiver,'" Kirk said with a smile. "It doesn't work like that, and that's fine."

His value surfaced in other ways, just as the coaches anticipated. His teammates started to notice his production on Sundays wasn't an accident. He never took a day off, never coasted through a practice. He lifted the offense with him.

"Christian works like a first-year guy in the league, like he's battling for a roster spot," running back Travis Etienne said. "Guys are attracted to that. They respect that."

Problem was, the losses kept piling up. After a 40-14 beatdown in Detroit in Week 13, the Jaguars were 4-8. Rinse, repeat on another lost season? After the team landed back home that evening, Kirk asked Lawrence and a few teammates to swing by his house — the two live in the same neighborhood — and with "Sunday Night Football" on in the background, the veteran wideout got right to the point.

Things needed to change. Lawrence needed to be more vocal, more demanding.

"If you don't like something, tell them," Kirk remembered saying. "If you're not comfortable with a call, tell them. If something doesn't feel right, tell us."

In other words: Let's get real with each other. We've got thick skin. We're 4-8. We don't have a choice.

Most important?

"We couldn't fall back on that here-we-go-again mind-set," Kirk said. "It's easy to do that around here."

He wouldn't let them. Lawrence wouldn't, either. The Jags ripped off five straight wins to close the regular season and earn their first A.F.C. South title since 2017.

It was also the first time they hadn't finished last in the division in five years.

A bond built on golf courses around Jacksonville that spring served as the catalyst behind the team's second-half surge. One afternoon, a few weeks in, Kirk remembered it hitting him. "This guy gets it," he thought of Lawrence. He just needed time to grow.

And that's why Kirk was comfortable, six months later, keeping it real with him. Kirk wanted Lawrence to take ownership of not only the offense but the franchise. He knew the Jaguars were close; six of their eight losses were by a score or less. In a league decided by ever-slimmer margins, they were on the doorstep, even if no one else saw it. Lawrence needed to push them through.

Kirk gave him the nudge.

"You have this vision of most wideouts, and they aren't like Christian," Lawrence said eight months later. "Honestly, the way he carries himself kind of reminds me of a quarterback."

A season that in years past would've stumbled into January was instead resuscitated. The playoff opener against the Chargers followed a similar script: awful start, electric finish. A 27-0 hole became a 31-30 win. Kirk caught the final touchdown.

Same ol' Jaguars?

"Not anymore," he said.

Basking in the Silence

An hour after the Jaguars' ninth training camp practice, Kirk slipped into a seat at the team's sparkling new $120 million practice facility next door. All around him, there were hints of a new era, and new expectations.

"That was easily the most fans I've ever seen at practice since I've been here," he said.

The transformation has been "night and day," he pointed out. Kirk and the newcomers learned quickly in Jacksonville: It's hard to keep the attention of a city that's usually checked out by mid-December.

Not last year. And in Kirk's mind, not moving forward.

"Obviously, we all believe, everyone in that locker room," he said. "But the fans? They have to believe as well. We have to feel it from them, too."

The perspective he arrived with served as a humbling and necessary reminder: Things can change quickly in this league, and often do. A sizzling finish to one season does not mean it will carry over to the next.

It did Sept. 10, when the Jags scored the game's final 14 points in a 31-21 victory over the Indianapolis Colts for their seventh win in eight games, dating to last season. Kirk caught just one pass on three targets, as Calvin Ridley confirmed what everyone who watched the team in training camp already knew: He is Lawrence's new No. 1 target. Then, on Sunday, Kirk had 11 catches for 110 yards in a 17-9 loss to Kansas City.

Kirk's role was never going to be confined to a stat sheet. He has more ambitious aims. The mocking sentiment he remembered hearing last year when the wins started piling up — "Oh, the Jags are actually good?" he said, "like we were getting a pat on the back" — won't be the same this fall.

"This year, when we win, it's going to be like, 'That's what we expect,'" Kirk said. "The Jags are a good football team. End of story."

And he believes they will be for some time. He didn't come here to win one playoff game.

"I'd love to retire as a Jag," Kirk said. "Trevor's not going anywhere. I don't want to, either. That's my mind-set."

And it wasn't merely a money grab, either, no matter what the initial headlines screamed. Seventeen months after he landed a payday few believed he deserved, Kirk looks back on that moment through a different lens.

"It was like: OK, this is how God works. He gives you these blessings, but the moment you think you can sit back and be comfortable, he says, 'Boom, take this.'"

Kirk took it. He heard the hate, saved the screenshots, then had the best season of his career, helping lift a downtrodden franchise to the divisional round of the playoffs. The noise didn't last. Kirk earned that silence, relished it, and a year later, he marvels at how much the narrative around him has shifted.

One minute, he was Christian Kirk, the most overpaid receiver in football.

The next, he was Christian Kirk, worth every penny.

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Sara Durkacs, Secretary

Raymond Moriyama, Designer of Humane Public Spaces, Dies at 93

By PENELOPE GREEN



MORIYAMA TESHIMA ARCHITECTS

Raymond Moriyama evoked government transparency in his design of the Scarborough Civic Center, completed in 1973 in Toronto.



LUCAS OLENIUK/TORONTO STAR, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Mr. Moriyama was noted for listening to clients and peppering them with questions.

Raymond Moriyama, an iconoclastic Japanese Canadian architect whose childhood experiences of racism and internment led him to design open and inviting civic spaces that shaped the city of Toronto, died there on Sept. 1. He was 93.

His firm, Moriyama Teshima Architects, announced the death. No cause was given.

Mr. Moriyama was 12 when he designed his first building — a treehouse constructed from scavenged lumber and branches near the Slocan River in British Columbia.

He built it on the outskirts of a camp where he and his mother and two sisters were interned during World War II. More than 22,000 Japanese Canadians were confined in their own country after the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. His father, a schoolteacher and hardware store owner, had been thrown in prison for resisting an order to join a road camp, and it would be two years before the family was reunited.

In a documentary about his life, "Magical Imperfection" (2020), directed by Scott Calbeck, Mr. Moriyama recalled the slurs delivered by the Canadian Mounties who came to take his father away. "If you are called an enemy alien as a child of 12," he said, "and to be called a goddamn Jap, it will never escape you."

Yet as an architect, Mr. Moriyama made buildings designed for inclusion.

The Scarborough Civic Center — completed in 1973, for a district of Toronto — is a shimmering five-story building clad in aluminum and reflective glass, with an interior atrium ringed by open-plan office spaces that had vines hanging from their balconies. Mr. Moriyama's idea was to make the government accessible to the people. What was originally the mayor's office, on the ground floor, has a circular window, offering a metaphor for transparency and also, Mr. Moriyama joked, providing easy access to disgruntled citizens.

"If it's a bad administration," he said in the documentary, "you could throw a brick right through it."

Mr. Moriyama came of age and began working in "the golden age of Canadian architecture," Stefan Novakovic, a senior editor at Azure magazine, an architecture journal, told CBC News this month. "It was this time when we were transforming Canada from this sort of white colonial nation into the multicultural and diverse country that we know today."

Mr. Moriyama, Mr. Novakovic said, was one of the greatest Canadian architects of the 20th and early 21st century.

It was Mr. Moriyama who was chosen to design the new home of the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa, a $100 million project that opened in 2005; he collaborated on the project with Alex Rankin, a Canadian architect who had grown up in Belfast, its own kind of war zone.

"It's a bit of an irony, but it's appropriate that we got the job," Mr.



SHAI GIL, VIA MORIYAMA TESHIMA ARCHITECTS

Mr. Moriyama was responsible for building many of Toronto's landmarks. The Toronto Reference Library was finished in 1977.

Moriyama told The New York Times. The museum, a low-slung 450,000-square-foot building, is flanked by a river and a meadow; its arching roof is planted with grasses. Inside, there are all "the normal accouterments of any war museum," Clifford Krauss, then The Times's Toronto bureau chief, wrote: "vintage jeeps and tanks, war planes suspended from the ceiling, along with one of Hitler's limousines and the obligatory collection of medals for valor."

But, he continued, "there will also be portrait paintings of a war bride and a shellshocked soldier, an audio re-creation of the writings of a Loyalist child refugee escaping the American Revolution, and a teddy bear once carried by a Canadian Army stretcher bearer killed in World War I, given to him by his daughter as a good-luck charm."

In the museum's Memorial Hall, Mr. Moriyama set the headstone of what had marked the original resting place of the Canadian Unknown Soldier in a French cemetery. He designed a window for the spartan hall and placed it strategically, so that every year at precisely 11 a.m. on Nov. 11, Veterans Day, if the day is bright, a ray of sunshine will illuminate the headstone.

"What I discovered as a child was that, God, democracy is fragile," he told The Calgary Herald in 1992. "I thought about it until I was going to university, and maybe even into university, that you've got to fight for the rights of everybody, not just for yourself."

Raymond Junichi Moriyama was born in Vancouver on Oct. 11, 1929. His parents had immigrated from Japan when his father's brother asked for help with the hardware store he had opened in Vancouver.

Mr. Moriyama often said that a childhood accident determined his career: When he was 4, a model airplane he had built flew over a stove with a pot of bubbling stew on top of it. When he tried to retrieve the plane, the pot toppled over and he suffered terrible burns.

He was confined to bed for eight months and spent the time looking out the window at the construction going on outside. He was impressed by a man in a suit who showed up every day brandishing sheaves of paper, and who seemed to be in charge. When Raymond's father told him that the man was an architect, Raymond declared that that would be his profession, too.

After the war, the family moved to Hamilton, on Lake Ontario, where his father worked as a dishwasher and his mother cleaned houses. Raymond studied architecture at the University of Toronto on a scholarship and then at McGill, in Montreal.

After earning his master's degree there in 1957, he settled in Toronto with his wife, Sachiko (Miyauchi) Moriyama, known as Sachi, who had been his childhood sweetheart — they grew up on the same block in Vancouver. He opened his own firm in 1958 with $392, the extent of his savings.

His first commission was a golf course. His first significant commission was the Japanese Canadian Cultural Center, which opened in 1963. A gutsy Brutalist structure, it was designed to invoke a Japanese temple and to serve as a gathering place for the Japanese Canadian community. Japanese Canadians were not exactly flush with cash in the postwar years, and the center was built with a mortgage taken out by 70 of them.

Making Toronto more welcoming after his internment as a child during World War II.

It was the Ontario Science Center, designed to celebrate Canada's centennial in 1967 — the building was completed two years later — that made Mr. Moriyama's name. It is a modernist 500,000-square feet assemblage of concrete shapes linked by bridges and escalators and filled with interactive exhibits, a revolutionary concept at the time.

Critics jeered, he recalled, likening its participatory features — including a planetarium and an amateur radio station — to a carnival and judging them unsuitable for a museum. But the public loved it, and in 2007 it was memorialized on a postage stamp.

In 1970, Mr. Moriyama formed a partnership with the architect Ted Teshima. In 1975, The Financial Post reported, their staff of 11 included a political scientist and an architect whose background was in philosophy.

One of the firm's standout works was the Toronto Reference Library, a generous glass and brick structure, completed in 1977. But their projects were not confined to Canada. They designed a transit mall in Buffalo to revitalize the city's main street; the National Museum of Saudi Arabia, in Riyadh; and the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo, a glass and aluminum trapezoid that hovers above an open garden and plaza built on the fourth story of a commercial building.

And then there's the Bata Shoe Museum, a whimsical limestone-clad "shoebox" — or Mr. Moriyama's interpretation of one — in downtown Toronto. It was the passion project of Sonja Bata, whose husband, Thomas Bata, was the heir to the Bata Shoe Company. Ms. Bata, who died in 2018, wanted a home to exhibit her 13,000 pairs of shoes — a historically important collection representing 4,500 years of shoe artistry, from sealskin Inuit boots to 18th-century heels and chopines from the Italian Renaissance.

Mr. Moriyama is survived by his wife; three daughters, Michi, Midori, Murina; two sons, Jason and Ajon, and 10 grandchildren.

In 1985, Mr. Moriyama was made an Officer of the Order of Canada. In 1997, he received the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada's Gold Medal, Canadian architecture's highest honor. He retired in 2003.

Mr. Moriyama was noted for his ability to listen to his clients. He often described himself as "a professional dumdum" — a dogged interlocutor whose questions led to some extraordinary structures and, at least once, to no structure at all.

When a prominent lawyer and his wife asked Mr. Moriyama to design a house for them, he recalled to The Financial Post in 1975, "I listened for 40 minutes and found out they had nice homes and many, many cars and a cottage and boats and all the rest. So I told them, OK, you don't need an architect, you need family counseling, because an architect can't fuse you together."

Robert Klane, 81, Irreverent Writer Who Created 'Weekend at Bernie's'

By RICHARD SANDOMIR



HULTON ARCHIVE, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Robert Klane with Terry Kiser, who played an ostensibly alive character in "Weekend at Bernie's."

Robert Klane, a comic novelist, screenwriter and filmmaker with a taste for gleeful vulgarity who wrote the screenplay for "Weekend at Bernie's," the 1989 cult film about two young insurance company employees who create the illusion that their murdered boss is still alive, died on Aug. 29 at his home in Woodland Hills, Calif. He was 81.

His son Jon said the cause was kidney failure.

Mr. Klane wrote "Weekend at Bernie's" more than two decades into a career that began with the publication of two humorous novels: "The Horse Is Dead: A Tasteless Novel" (1968) and "Where's Poppa?" (1970). He adapted "Where's Poppa?" into the screenplay for a twisted comedy about a single lawyer (played by George Segal) who dreams of scaring to death or institutionalizing his aged, maddening mother (Ruth Gordon).

Ted Kotcheff, who directed "Weekend at Bernie's," wrote in his 2017 memoir, "Director's Cut: My Life in Film," that Mr. Klane had been inspired to write it by his time as an advertising copywriter in the 1960s, when the top executives at one of the agencies where he worked invited employees to their beach houses on Long Island.

"But he always wondered what would happen if the underlings got a house all to themselves — inmates taking over the asylum," Mr. Kotcheff wrote.

In "Bernie's," the young workers (Andrew McCarthy and Jonathan Silverman) discover a $2 million fraud but don't know that their boss, Bernie (Terry Kiser), is the culprit. Bernie invites them to his beach house, ostensibly as a reward, and asks his mobster partner to kill them. But the mobster tells the hit man to kill Bernie instead for sleeping with his girlfriend.

The employees — fearful that they might be next on the hit list — frantically make Bernie seem alive by, among other ruses, putting sunglasses on him, rolling him out to his sun deck and rigging a device that raises his arm so he appears to be waving to people.

The film, which grossed a modest $30 million (a little less than $75 million in today's money), gained fans long after its release through home video and cable-TV viewing. People magazine wrote in 2014 that the movie "has managed to age into something close to respectability."

A 1989 film that aged 'into something close to respectability.'

Mr. Klane believed that the Bernie character was too dead to revive cinematically. But a sequel was made — because Victor Drai, one of the original film's producers, raised the money from its Italian distributor, Mr. Drai recalled in a phone interview.

Mr. Klane was the director as well as the writer of "Weekend at Bernie's II" (1993), which involves the discovery of Bernie's offshore bank account, containing the embezzled money, and a voodoo ceremony to try reanimating him.

The reviews were roundly negative.

"If ever there was a career-ending movie," the Miami Herald critic Rene Rodriguez wrote, " 'Weekend at Bernie's II' is it."

But for Mr. Klane, it wasn't. He kept working.

Robert Klane was born on Oct. 17, 1941, in Port Jefferson, N.Y., on Long Island, and grew up in nearby Patchogue and Bayport. His father, Edward, was a physician. His mother, Adele (Blum) Klane, was a homemaker.

After graduating from the University of North Carolina in 1963 with a bachelor's degree in English, Mr. Klane returned to New York and found work in advertising.

Over the next few years he was a commercial copywriter at two agencies, Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn (now BBDO) and McCann Erickson (now McCann). In 1967 he went to work at Filmex, a production house, where he directed commercials.

In his spare time he wrote "The Horse Is Dead," about a camp counselor who hates his campers. The book was labeled "filth and smut simply for the sake of smut" by a self-appointed decent literature committee that wanted it removed from a library in Bel Air, Md., in 1968. But commissioners in Harford County, Md., refused to ban it.

On the other hand, Jack Benny sent Mr. Klane a fan letter telling him that it was the funniest book he had ever read.

Two years later, Mr. Klane published "Where's Poppa?," and that same year Carl Reiner directed the film version, with a script by Mr. Klane. Vincent Canby of The New York Times wrote that the film did not have "much more on its mind than a desperate desire to provoke shock and laughter" — which, he said, it did successfully.



MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Mr. Klane and Donna Summer on the set of "Thank God It's Friday," a 1978 film he directed. One of its songs won an Oscar.

Jon Klane recalled going to a theater to see the film with his father, who stayed in the lobby. "I came out to get candy, and he was watching a matronly woman demand a refund," he said by phone. "I went up to him, and he said, 'This is exactly the kind of person I want to offend.' "

Over the next three decades, Mr. Klane stayed busy in television and film. He wrote six episodes of the sitcom "M*A*S*H"; the 1985 film "National Lampoon's European Vacation," with John Hughes; "The Man With One Red Shoe," a 1985 remake of the French comedy "The Tall Blond Man with One Black Shoe," which starred Tom Hanks; and, in 1997, 11 episodes of Tracey Ullman's sketch comedy series "Tracey Takes On . . . ," for which he and several others received an Emmy Award for outstanding variety, music or comedy series.

His directing work included "Thank God It's Friday" (1978), set entirely in a disco, which won the Academy Award for best original song, "Last Dance," sung by the disco diva Donna Summer, one of its stars; and "The Odd Couple: Together Again," a 1993 TV movie that reunited Jack Klugman and Tony Randall, the stars of that 1970s sitcom.

In addition to his son Jon, Mr. Klane is survived by his wife, J.C. Scott; a daughter, Caitlin Klane; another son, David; a brother, Larry; and five grandchildren. Another daughter, Tracy Klane, died in 2011. His marriages to Linda Tesh and the actress Anjanette Comer ended in divorce.

About 20 years ago, Mr. Klane worked with his son Jon on a script, set in a ski resort, that would have rebooted the "Bernie's" franchise. It did not sell.

"We wore out the carpet coming up with gags," Jon Klane said. "It was my best memory of him. He would say, 'It has to be a laugh a page, Jonny.' "

James Hoge, 87, Dies; The Editor and Publisher Of Two Big City Tabloids

By CLYDE HABERMAN

James Hoge, who was a blue-blooded editor and publisher of blue-collar newspapers in Chicago and New York for a quarter-century and then long guided a leading journal on international relations, died on Tuesday in Manhattan. He was 87.

His son James Patrick Hoge confirmed the death, at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center, but did not specify the cause. Mr. Hoge's death came four weeks after that of his younger brother, Warren, a former foreign correspondent and top editor at The New York Times.

Few editors at major American newspapers have been as young

The Sun-Times won six Pulitzers before he left Chicago for New York to revive a paper.

as Mr. Hoge was when he rose to the top at The Chicago Sun-Times, a tabloid aimed at a working-class readership. He became the city editor at age 29, editor in chief at 33 and publisher at 44.

He shook up the staff, strove for sprightlier writing and, like other newspaper editors in the 1970s, introduced new sections on business, food and fashion. "I am always agitating," he said.

The payoff was six Pulitzer Prizes on his watch: two each for feature photography and criticism and one each for spot news reporting (concerning violence by young radicals in Chicago) and local news reporting (on new evidence in the 1966 murder, still unsolved, of Valerie Percy, a daughter of Charles H. Percy of Illinois, then making his first United States Senate race).

As editor, Mr. Hoge (pronounced hoag) gave his blessing to an investigation into the questionable use of Roman Catholic Church money by Chicago's cardinal, John Cody. And he ran Seymour M. Hersh's 1969 account of the My Lai massacre, a mass killing of civilians by American soldiers in Vietnam.

A notably hard-charging endeavor was the newspaper's 1977 purchase of a downtown Chicago bar, done in partnership with a watchdog group, the Better Government Association. With hidden cameras, journalists documented a pattern of city inspectors taking bribes and kickbacks in return for ignoring health and safety hazards at the bar, which was called the Mirage Tavern.

The shakedowns formed a 25-part series in 1978 that led to government investigations and a reworking of Chicago's building code. Nonetheless, the deception inherent to such an operation troubled editors at other newspapers. Though The Sun-Times was nominated for a Pulitzer, it was denied the prize because of its undercover tactics.

In those years, it was almost impossible to read a newspaper or magazine profile of the blond, blue-eyed Mr. Hoge that didn't scramble for adjectives to describe him as handsome. Robert Redford was an occasional point of reference. So, too, was the fact that he was reared in Park Avenue wealth and later lived in a Gramercy Park duplex in Manhattan.

He could be warm and generous with friends, and someone who nurtured new talent. But more than a few others at The Sun-Times deemed him aloof and insensitive, even ruthless on occasion, to such an extent that some reporters took to calling him "Attila the Hoge."

For a couple of years in the 1970s Mr. Hoge edited both The Sun-Times and The Chicago Daily News, a struggling afternoon newspaper whose four overseas bureaus he closed to cut costs. Even back then — long before many newspapers went out of business in an online world — The Daily News was beyond salvation. It was shuttered in 1978.

In 1984, Mr. Hoge's time in Chicago also ended. He had put together a group that sought to buy The Sun-Times from its parent company, Field Enterprises, but they were no match for Rupert Murdoch and the $100 million he offered. Mr. Hoge left the newspaper once the new owners took over in January. Months later he was back in his hometown, New York, as the publisher of The Daily News, a once-mighty tabloid that had fallen on tough times in a city with a shrinking working class and a growing population of non-English speakers and readers.

"Survival is at stake, and there is no time to lose," Mr. Hoge told News employees in 1986. That same year the Daily News columnist Jimmy Breslin won a Pulitzer for commentary. But Mr. Hoge foundered when he sought to reduce the overstaffing and featherbedding that had long defined labor practices at the newspaper.

The unions pushed back hard, with a five-month strike in 1990 and 1991 that was scarred by a few physical attacks on people who did go to work. There was enduring bitterness. When the strike ended and a new owner, Robert Maxwell, took over, dozens of Daily News workers chanted "Hoge must go." In short order, he did.

After accepting fellowships at Harvard and Columbia, Mr. Hoge became an editor and publisher yet again in 1992, this time at Foreign Affairs, a journal of the Council on Foreign Relations. Aware that some council members fretted over his tabloid background, he had some fun with them, offering a mock magazine cover with the model Cindy Crawford and teasers like "sexiest ethnic rivalries."

More sedately, Foreign Affairs did evolve. Mr. Hoge shortened articles, encouraged livelier writing, published six times a year instead of four, launched editions in several languages, nearly doubled the circulation — and made a profit.

"One has to be careful, but we are looking at how we can make it easier to get through the magazine and a little more enjoyable," he said. Among those who applauded his changes was Leslie H. Gelb, a former senior government official and New York Times columnist. "It often used to just sit on coffee tables," he said of the magazine in 1998. "Now people are actually reading it."

Mr. Hoge left Foreign Affairs in 2010. In addition to writing occasional articles on international matters, he was the board chairman of Human Rights Watch for a few years and a senior adviser at Teneo, a consulting firm.

James Fulton Hoge Jr. was born in Manhattan on Dec. 25, 1935, one of four children of James Sr., a successful trademark lawyer, and Virginia (McClamroch) Hoge, a patron of Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Opera and the New York Philharmonic.

The elder Mr. Hoge would bring home four or five newspapers at a time and leaf through them with his children with look-at-that enthusiasm. James and his brother, Warren, came to embrace journalism.

Both brothers attended Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire and Yale; James graduated from the academy in 1954 and from the university in 1958, with a bachelor's degree in political science. In 1961, he received a master's degree from the University of Chicago with a thesis on Woodrow Wilson's foreign policy.

The almost routine focus on his privileged background could make Mr. Hoge bristle, as he did during a 1989 Vanity Fair interview. "Sure, my father made a good living," he said, "but I never got a penny of inheritance. I didn't have any trust funds. I put myself through graduate school. I've paid for everything in my life. I started work at $76 a week, and that was my sole income."

"If you look like a WASP and you talk like a WASP, there's a kind of inverse racism," he added. "That is shortchanging us who are like that."

In 1962, Mr. Hoge married Alice Albright, a freelance journalist and later a screenwriter, whose grandfather Joseph Medill Patterson had founded The Daily News in New York and whose aunt, Alicia Patterson, founded Newsday, on Long Island. Their marriage ended in 1971. Mr. Hoge's second marriage, in 1981 to Sharon King, a consumer reporter, also ended in divorce, in 1999. That same year he married Kathleen Lacey, now a senior managing director at Teneo. He lived in Manhattan.

In addition to his son James, from his first marriage, he is survived by Ms. Lacey; a sister, Virginia Verwaal; a daughter, Alicia Hoge Adams, and another son, Robert Warren Hoge, both also from his first marriage; a son, Spencer, from a relationship with the television journalist Cynthia McFadden; two stepchildren, Kienan and Devin Lacey; five granddaughters; and three grandsons. His other sister, Barbara Hoge Daine, died in 2001.

Mr. Hoge had begun his journalism career as a reporter, in 1963 at The Sun-Times, but found that writing was not his strength. "At best I was workmanlike," he told New York magazine in 1984, and added: "Eventually, I discovered that I had more natural talent as an editor. And over the years I've taken a great deal of vicarious pleasure in other people's writing."



UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

James Hoge, publisher and editor of The Chicago Sun-Times, center, in 1983 with Marshall Field, right, chairman of its owner, Field Enterprises, and Rupert Murdoch, left, chairman of News Corp.



RON GALELLA COLLECTION, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Mr. Hoge at a charity event in 1990, when he was publisher of The New York Daily News.

Irish Grinstead, 43, of R&B Girl Group 702

By ORLANDO MAYORQUIN and ALEX TRAUB

Irish Grinstead, a member of the R&B trio 702, best known for their 1999 hit, "Where My Girls At?," died on Saturday. She was 43.

Her sister and bandmate LeMisha Fields announced the death in an Instagram post. It provided no other details. The group announced in December that Ms. Grinstead was taking a "medical leave of absence due to serious medical issues."

The Grinstead sisters and Kameelah Williams made up 702, which was named for the telephone area code in Las Vegas, where they were from.

The group's 1996 debut album, "No Doubt," included a song called "Steelo," featuring the rapper,

Hitting peak fame in 1999 with the song 'Where My Girls At?'

singer and producer Missy Elliott. A version of the track was the theme song for the Nickelodeon show "Cousin Skeeter." (The song was also sampled in a 2019 dance music hit, "On My Mind," produced by Diplo.)

"Where My Girls At?" was 702's defining hit, peaking at No. 4 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart in 1999. It appeared on their second album, "702," and it was written and produced by Missy Elliott, who "was a big player in our success," Ms. Fields told The Las Vegas Review-Journal in 2014. Ms. Grinstead was 18 when it was released.

The song, a thumping, danceable number with sweet harmonizing by the trio, carries lyrics warning off a female romantic rival. But the song's refrain — its title — sounds as much like a young woman's expression of need for her friends.

"Although the group is not often remembered as much as some of their '90s counterparts" — among them Destiny's Child and TLC — "the singing trio had a huge influence on the culture of R&B music," Vibe magazine wrote in 2018.

Irish Beatrice Grinstead was born on June 2, 1980, in Harris, Texas, to Carlton and Theresa (Washington) Grinstead.

She began singing around the age of 10. With LeMisha and Irish's twin sister, Orish, they performed at sports events and other venues in Las Vegas, where the sisters had grown up. They occasionally sang at Caesars Palace, the hotel and casino. The comedian Sinbad saw them there and encouraged them to go to Atlanta for a music convention.

During that event they cornered the musician and producer Michael Bivins in a hotel lobby and persuaded him to give them a chance. He did, supplied them with their band name as well and signed them to a record contract. All three were still in their teens.

But before the trio recorded their first album, Orish dropped out, making room for Ms. Williams, a friend of the Grinstead girls since the sixth grade.

"People are asking me for my autograph," Irish told The Review-Journal in wonderment in 1999, "and we were just talking to each other at school."

The group released its last album, "Star," in 2003 and broke up soon after. They resumed doing shows more recently, with several scheduled through the rest of this year.

Complete information on Ms. Grinstead's survivors was not available. Orish Grinstead died in 2008, according to IMDb.

"It was a whirlwind," their sister Ms. Fields told The Review-Journal in 2014, looking back at her group's stardom. "We toured all over the world and met artists like Whitney Houston and Diana Ross. The life that we lived was almost like a dream."

Kirsten Noyes contributed research.



RON GALELLA COLLECTION VIA GETTY IMAGES

Irish Grinstead, right, with her sister LeMisha, center, and Kameelah Williams, left, 702's lead singer, attending the Teen Choice Awards in 1999.

Deaths

Danziger, Joel
Egan, Margot
Gahan, Creina
Globus, David
Phillips, Jeannette
Scheckman, Jerome
Silberman, Sandra
Steinweg, Bernard
Tuerkheimer, Frank

DANZIGER—Joel.
The partners, attorneys and staff of Danziger & Markhoff LLP mourn the loss of Joel Danziger who was the founding partner of Danziger & Markhoff LLP. Joel was a brilliant and innovative attorney who founded the law firm in 1960 and guided it for the past 63 years. Joel was recognized as a leading and innovative employee benefits lawyer and tax attorney and was a trusted advisor to those whom he represented. He will be sorely missed by the partners, attorneys and staff of Danziger & Markhoff LLP and all the many and diverse clients whom he represented and counseled over the past 63 years.

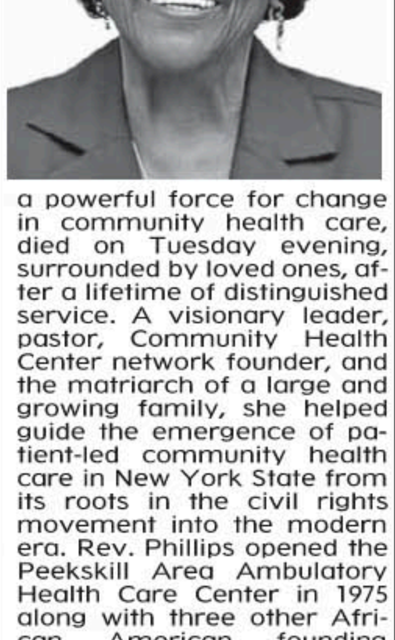
DANZIGER—Joel,
age 90, died at his home in Bedford, NY, on Monday, September 18, 2023. Joel was born on October 17, 1932 in the Bronx to the late Mildred Collier Danziger and Harry Danziger. Joel earned his B.A. in History from Columbia College in 1953 and graduated from Yale Law School in 1956. He was the founding partner of the White Plains law firm Danziger & Markhoff. Joel was entirely devoted to his family. His beloved survivors include his wife of sixty-five years, Joan Kaufman Danziger; his three children and their spouses, Robert Danziger (Susie) of Bedford, NY, Marc Danziger (Joan) of Hastings-on-Hudson, NY, and Sarah Danziger Valentino (Chris) of Pleasantville, NY; and his grandchildren, Hannah Danziger, Leah Danziger, Samantha Danziger, Jed Danziger, Augustus Valentino, and Matilda Valentino. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Northern Westchester Hospital at Northern Westchester Hospital Foundation, 400 East Main Street, Mount Kisco, NY 10549 or online at: www.nwhconnect.org/give.

EGAN—Margot Tweedy,
died peacefully at home on Monday, September 4, 2023 after a long illness. She was born in New York City on May 2, 1955, the daughter of Gordon and Mary (Johnson) Tweedy. Margot was raised in New York City, Brewster, NY and Stowe, VT, graduating from Yale and completing a Master's of Social Work Degree from New York University. On May 15, 1999 she married W. Eric Egan at The Lake in Central Park. They raised twin sons, William and Landfield. As a family, they spent their time in New York City and Stockbridge, Massachusetts. For many years Margot kept a small psychotherapy practice in the Carnegie Hill section of New York City and served on the board of Austin Riggs in Stockbridge. Later in life she spent much of her time in Truro on the outer cape, a place that became dear to her heart. Margot was also a lifelong skier and a dedicated rower. She was a voracious reader of all genres of literature and recorded for the blind for a number of years. To all her friends and most everyone she met, Margot had a way of making people feel special through simple, everyday conversation. Her graciousness, courage, curiosity and commitment to family will be missed but has provided a wonderful legacy to her husband and children. Margot is survived by her husband and their sons and her sister, Clare McMorris. She was pre-deceased by another sister, Ann Savage. She was laid to rest at the Old North Cemetery in Truro, Massachusetts. In her memory, contributions can be made to Doctors Without Borders or the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

GAHAN—Creina Elizabeth Norah.
Died peacefully on August 26, aged 92. Beloved sister, aunt, friend. She will be missed.

GLOBUS—David.
My doctor for 42 years. He saved so many lives. I loved him.
D. Hautzig

PHILLIPS—The Reverend Jeannette J.



a powerful force for change in community health care, died on Tuesday evening, surrounded by loved ones, after a lifetime of distinguished service. A visionary leader, pastor, Community Health Center network founder, and the matriarch of a large and growing family, she helped guide the emergence of patient-led community health care in New York State from its roots in the civil rights movement into the modern era. Rev. Phillips opened the Peekskill Area Ambulatory Health Care Center in 1975 along with three other African American founding mothers: the late Mary Woods, Willie Mae Jackson, and Pearl Woods, to provide access to health care for their community. With the other founders and long-time CEO Anne Kauffman Nolon, she grew the Peekskill Health Center—now Sun River Health— into one of the largest Federally Qualified Health Center networks in the United States, serving patients across the Hudson Valley, New York City, and Long Island at nearly 50 sites. Jeannette J. Phillips was born in Harlem, New York City in 1933. She attended the historic Booker T. Washington High School in Miami, Florida, where her academic and social engagements, including delivering an anti-Korean War graduation message, helped shape her future pursuits. Upon her graduation in 1955, Rev. Phillips accepted a job at the Veterans Hospital in Montrose, New York, where she became passionate about increasing access to quality health care. In 1956, she married Howard Phillips. When they were approached by a member of the Veteran's Administration to provide housing for community veterans and seniors, they readily accepted and invited them into their own home. This gave Rev. Phillips a firsthand understanding of the unmet needs of residents in her own community. In 1972, Rev. Phillips, along with Deputy Commissioner of the Westchester Health Department Dr. Phyllis Koteen, Dr. Ron Johnson of the New York Medical Academy at Grasslands in Valhalla, and Westchester Community Action Program Director Harriet Gelfan, spearheaded efforts to secure one of the last grants from the Office of Economic Opportunity to open the Peekskill Area Ambulatory Health Care Center. This work was completed with the late Mary Woods, Willie Mae Jackson, and Pearl Woods. With CEO Anne Kauffman Nolon, Rev. Phillips and the other founders responded to requests from surrounding communities to bring the same vision for accessible care to their own towns and counties: that health care is a basic human right for all, and not a privilege for some. The same community-led approach to growth continues for Sun River Health to this day. Rev. Phillips was always candid about the challenges of running a non-profit health care provider, and the constant pressure to find or create funding to meet growing patient needs that could not be covered by federal or state supports - especially in the first few years of operation. "We were able to raise money with local fundraising," she said. "We had one particular group, the 'Soul Sisters,' who sold dinners, and pies, and cakes, and whatever else to help get money into the organization. You couldn't get more grass roots than we were." After founding the health center, Rev. Phillips earned her Bachelor of Science with honors from Mercy College and went on to attend New York Theological Seminary, later completing four years of Conference Studies in the A.M.E. Zion Church. She was ordained as a Deacon, then an Elder in 1992, and became the pastor of the historic Woodside A.M.E. Zion Church in Stamford, Connecticut. In 2015, Sun River Health's Peekskill health center was renamed The Jeannette J. Phillips Community Health Center with many dignitaries present, including Dr. Jack Geiger, one of the founders of the Community Health Center movement, who opened the nation's first two community health centers in Boston, MA and Mound Bayou, MS; Congresswomen Nita Lowey, and others. She was subsequently honored by the New York State Legislature in the State Capital. Rev. Phillips was the recipient of numerous other awards and recognitions, including the New York State Governor's Award for African Americans of Distinction in 1994, The CHCA-NYS Catherine M. Abate Memorial award in 2018, and Crain's Notable Women in Healthcare in 2019. Her most cherished recognitions were the Sojourner Truth Award, which she received in 1994, and The Harriet Tubman Award for her work as the Westchester District President of the Harriet Tubman Home Historical Society. Driven by her belief in the deep interdependence of housing and health care, Rev. Phillips served as the Executive Director of The Preservation Company, Inc. established by Sun River Health over thirty years ago to meet the housing needs of the Peekskill community. Rev. Phillips was the proud matriarch of her family, which includes her three daughters and two sons, her grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren, over 100 in all. Rev. Phillips also shared her love of ministry with her husband, the Rev. Howard Phillips, both revered and sought after throughout the Hudson Valley as innovative and life-changing preachers. "It is my faith that keeps me grounded," Rev. Phillips often said. "And it is my belief that God equips and strengthens those who are called to serve." Donations welcome to Park Street AME Zion Church, Peekskill NY; and the Sun River Health Foundation Heritage Library Fund.

SCHECKMAN—Jerome M.
Passed peacefully alongside his loving family on September 18, 2023, at the age of 88. Beloved husband of Joan for 60 years. Loving father of Robert and Susan. Adored papa of Becca, Rachel, Amanda and Adam. He will be forever missed.

SILBERMAN—Sandra.
The entire Hebrew Home at Riverdale and RiverSpring Living community mourns the passing of Sandra Silberman, beloved mother of our dear friend and colleague Joy Solomon. Sandy reveled in her role as a mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. A lifelong Baltimorean, Sandy's legacy of tikun olam lives on through her incredible daughters and their families. We extend our deepest condolences to Susan Liebeskind (Peter), Debra Weinberg (Joe), Amy Blow (Colin) and Joy Solomon (Michael) as well as her cherished grandchildren and great - great - grandchildren. May Sandy's memory be for a blessing.
Daniel Reingold
President & CEO
RiverSpring Living

STEINWEG—Bernard,
90, of White Plains, NY, and Palm Beach Gardens, FL, passed away peacefully surrounded by love from his family on September 18, 2023 after a brief illness. He is survived by his treasured wife of 67 years, Betty Lynn (Frenkel), his sons Peter (Lanna) of Miramar, FL, and David (Erica) of Shaker Heights, OH, his dear grandchildren Joshua, Jordan and Sophie (to whom he will always be known as "Poppy,") his sister, MaryAnn Fribourg of New York, NY, and his little doxie, Noodles. Bernie was born in Dortmund Germany on May 24,1933 to Paul and Greta (Jacoby) Steinweg. He immigrated to the US in 1934, right before WWII, and grew up in Manhattan. He survived polio as a high school senior and graduated from Cornell University. He quickly embarked in a career in the grain business as an executive with the Continental Grain Company which took him across the world living in Paris, Milan, Buenos Aires, and Rio De Janeiro. He was a warm, thoughtful and generous man who was liked and admired by all who knew him. He was a passionate golfer, traveler, opera lover, New York sports fan, crossword puzzler and supporter of the arts. He often considered himself to be the luckiest man in the world. His greatest love was for his family by whom he will be deeply missed. A Memorial Service for Bernard will be held Wednesday, September 20, 2023 at 1:00pm at IJ Morris at Star of David of the Palm Beaches, 9321 Memorial Park Road, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33412. Fond memories and expressions of sympathy may be shared at www.starofdavidfunerals.com for the Steinweg family.

TUERKHEIMER—Frank Mitchel,
died on September 16, 2023, in Madison, Wisconsin from complications of pancreatic cancer, surrounded by family. Frank was born in New York City on July 27, 1939, months after his family fled Nazi Germany. He grew up in the city's Washington Heights neighborhood, and graduated from the Bronx High School of Science, Columbia University, and New York University School of Law. Following a judicial clerkship with U.S. District Court Judge Edward Weinfeld, Frank served as a Legal Assistant to the Attorney General of newly independent Swaziland. From 1965 until 1970, he served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Southern District of New York. In 1970, he joined the faculty of the University of Wisconsin Law School, where he was known to hold office hours sailing on Lake Mendota and where he was professor emeritus at the time of his death. From 1973 to 1975, he served as an Associate Special Prosecutor for the Watergate Special Prosecution Force, and, from 1977 to 1981, as the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin. Starting in 1985, he was of counsel at Godfrey & Kahn (formerly LaFollette & Sinykin), where he maintained an active pro bono practice. He is the co-author of Forgotten Trials of the Holocaust (NYU Press 2014). Frank loved biking, sailing, reading, travel, classical music, and, above all, spending time with his family and friends. His wisdom, sense of humor, and joy for life will be deeply missed. Frank is survived by his wife of 55 years, Barbara Wolfson Tuerkheimer, children Deborah Tuerkheimer (Dylan Smith) and Alan Tuerkheimer (Lisa Weiss), and grandchildren Max Tuerkheimer Smith, Leo Tuerkheimer Smith, Jacob Tuerkheimer, and Elizabeth (Lizzy) Tuerkheimer. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating in Frank's memory to Temple Beth El (Madison, Wisconsin), Equal Justice Initiative, or the Natural Resources Defense Council.

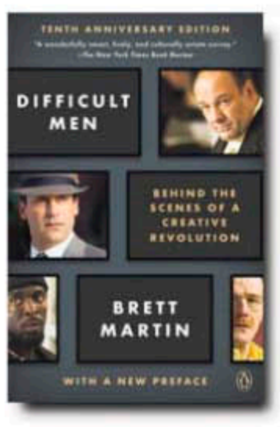
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AMIR HAMJA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Solo Sung In Isolation Fills Space With Life

The director Claus Guth's New York debut takes Schubert into a vast expanse.

By JOSHUA BARONE

MUNICH — In Schubert's song "Der Doppelgänger," a piano resounds with increasingly tormented chords as the narrator recounts a realization: that a pained stranger, wringing his hands in the night, is in fact himself.

"I think there is something like a moment where your soul steps out, and your body is there," the director Claus Guth said about the song over coffee in Munich. "It's this shocking moment: You understand that you're dying."

That instant, he said, is the heart of "Schwanengesang," the posthumous collection of Schubert's final songs, which is often performed as a cycle, like the composer's canonical "Die Schöne Müllerin" and "Winterreise." And it's that harrowing, transitional state that has inspired Guth's staging of "Schwanengesang," called "Doppelganger," which premieres at the Park Avenue Armory in Manhattan on Friday.

The production — featuring the star tenor Jonas Kaufmann performing with his longtime collaborator, the pianist Helmut Deutsch — will be the New York debut of Guth, one of the most sought-after opera directors in Europe.

Schubert's music is regularly presented in the Armory's intimate Board of Officers Room, the site of most of the arts center's recitals. The composer's songs, like those of

CONTINUED ON PAGE C7

The tenor Jonas Kaufmann, left, with the director Claus Guth, at the Park Avenue Armory.

His Reign Was Toppled In Minutes

The Rock & Roll Hall deliberated briefly before ousting Jann Wenner.

By BEN SISARIO

For years, Jann Wenner ruled over the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, viewing his chairmanship of its affiliated foundation as an extension of the cultural gatekeeping power he long wielded as the co-founder and editor of Rolling Stone magazine.

Wenner spoke for the hall publicly, opening its annual induction festivities and posing in chummy photos with music stars. Behind the scenes, he flaunted outsize influence over which of those artists got in, and spoke bluntly about the institution being under his control.

That power came to a swift and brutal end on Saturday afternoon as Wenner was ousted from the foundation's board, one day after he was quoted at length in an interview in The New York Times making remarks that were widely criticized as racist and misogynistic.

On Saturday, John Sykes, a media executive who took over as chairman from Wenner in 2020, emailed board members calling

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JASON ZINOMAN | ON COMEDY

Can a Comic Stretch the Truth Too Far?

Hasan Minhaj's penchant for making up stories goes a step beyond embellishment.

WHEN I FIRST HEARD that The New Yorker had published an exposé on the veracity of the stand-up comedy of Hasan Minhaj, I rolled my eyes.

We're fact-checking jokes now? Come on. Comedy is an art, not an op-ed. And honesty has always struck me as the most overrated virtue in comedy. But Clare Malone's reporting in the piece is scrupulous and fair, if a little prosecutorial in its focus. It presents more questions than answers and should inspire some rethinking of the muddy relationship between comedy and truth.

Digging into his last two specials, Malone reveals Hasan Minhaj as a comic who leans on fictions to make real-world arguments, putting himself closer to the center of news stories to make him seem more brave or wronged or in danger. To take one example, Minhaj says in "The King's Jester" (2022) that after the government passed the Patriot Act in the wake of Sept. 11, an undercover F.B.I. informant named Brother Eric had infiltrated his childhood mosque and had dinner at his house. Minhaj recalls how he sniffed him out and, in a prank, asked about getting a pilot's license, which led to a police officer throwing him against a car.

The New Yorker found that there was such a man working in counterterrorism

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BRYAN DERBALLA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

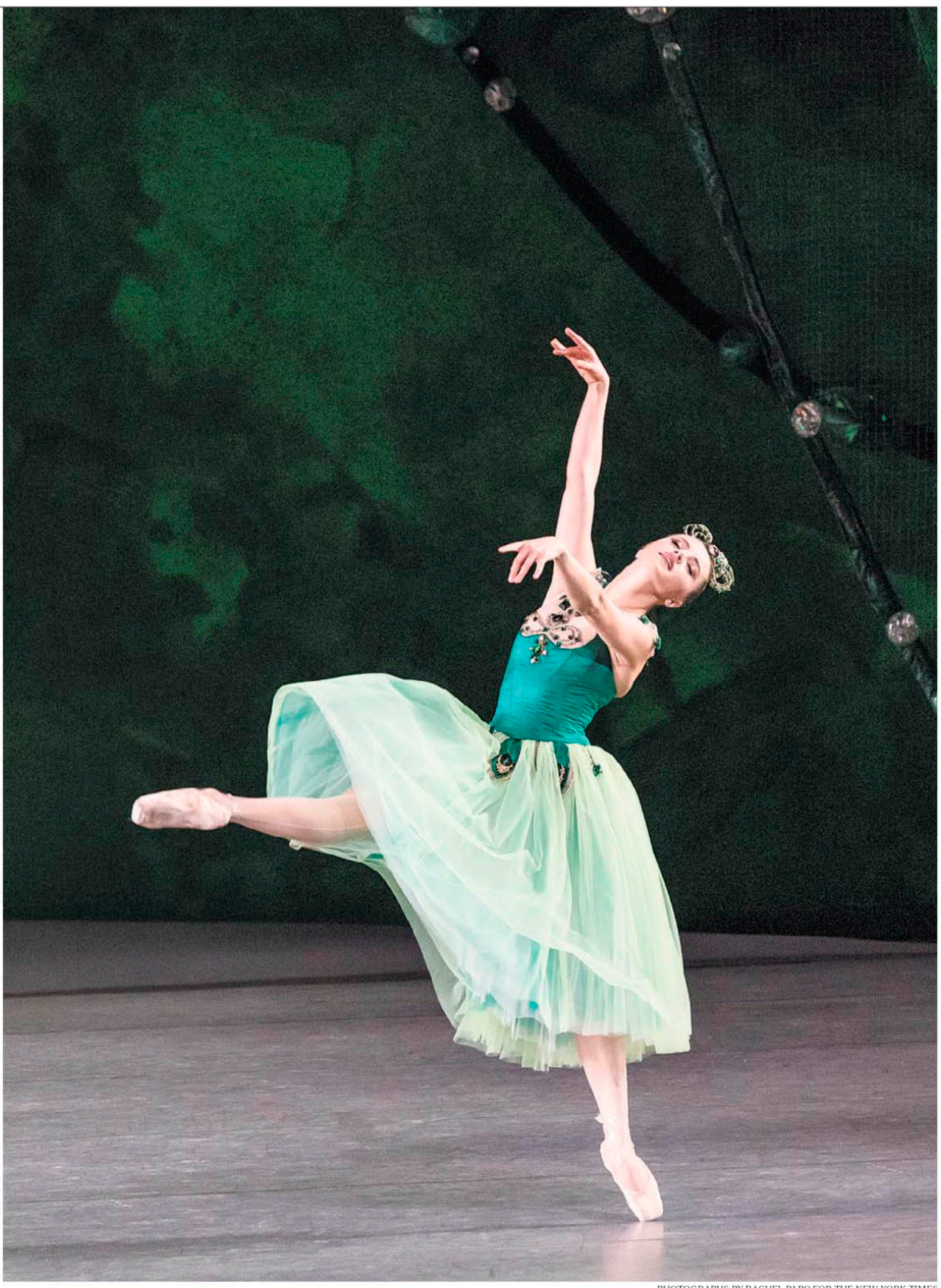
Hasan Minhaj taping his show "Patriot Act" in 2018. He has said his fabrications get at an "emotional truth."

GIA KOURLAS | DANCE REVIEW



A Fabled Troupe Celebrates Its 75th

Hundreds of dancers, past and present, took a bow, and the company featured George Balanchine's triptych 'Jewels.'



PHOTOGRAPHS BY RACHEL PAPO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



Clockwise, from top left: New York City Ballet dancers taking to the stage after "Diamonds" on the opening night of the company's 75th-anniversary season; Indiana Woodward made a role debut in "Emeralds"; Russell Janzen and Sara Mearns danced with impeccable, understated grandeur in the "Diamonds" pas de deux.

GEORGE BALANCHINE, by his own admission, always admired jewels, a quality he attributed to his Georgian roots. "I like the color of gems, the beauty of stones," he wrote in "101 Stories of the Great Ballets."

When, in 1967, the curtain rose at New York City Ballet on his opulent triptych, known as the first full-length plotless ballet, it had no unifying title. But there was a unifying idea: precious stones. "Emeralds" possesses the fragrant earthiness and secrecy of nature; "Rubies" is heat and playfulness, with the games and posturing of a summerscape in New York City; and "Diamonds" casts a dazzling spell of cool refinement that wavers between soft and hard.

"Jewels," as it came to be called, is an occasion as well as a ballet. On Tuesday, it opened City Ballet's 75th anniversary at Lincoln Center, which included a special tribute to the dancers who have been part of the company since 1948 when it was formed by Balanchine and the writer and philanthropist Lincoln Kirstein. (The music was performed live, though before the show, members of the New York City Ballet Orchestra held a rally in front of Lincoln Center's plaza to protest delays in contract negotiations.)

To see so many dancers fill the stage after "Diamonds" — more than 350, including a few from its 75-year-old beginnings — as well as inimitable stars like Suzanne Farrell, Allegra Kent, Patricia McBride and Edward Villella — made for a poignant, physical statement. These were jewels in the flesh.

Yet you also thought of the many dancers who weren't there. Ghosts were in the air. As the "Pomp and Circumstance" march played — maybe something else would have been better? — Farrell, amid the cheers and waves, pressed her fingertips together and cast her eyes downward. Her solemnity was striking.

As for the performance? Certainly, joy was in the air — though perhaps, in the case of "Rubies," an unfortunate overflow. "Jewels" loosely references three schools of ballet: French, American and Russian. During the evening, the sections' different looks and sensations were apparent, but most clearly felt was the singular choreographic hand stringing them together. "Jewels" is a banquet of Balanchine starting with "Emeralds," the evening's most subtle, most mysterious and, because of that, most fragile ballet. Saturated in green like a dewy forest and set to Fauré, it pays homage to French Romanticism.

Leading roles included debuts for Indiana Woodward and Tyler Angle. His elegant, able partnering sets a dancer free, and Woodward — French, like Violette Verdy, the originator of her part — was transcendently herself, glowing with her own indelible perfume.

Dancing cleanly and clearly, Woodward used her imagination to great effect in a solo focusing on the arms as they curved and parted the air, swooping to linger by her face or reaching behind to form a kind of innocence meeting ecstasy. In their pas de deux, Angle and Woodward shaped the notes as they came together and separated like easy, rippling waves. Less seamless was Emilie Gerrity who, with too much anguish in her expression, wavered between control and hesitation, in a solo of her own.

In "Rubies," set to Stravinsky and instilled with a jazzy swagger, Mira Nadon, the statuesque female soloist, stretched and splayed her limbs with abandon as she glided through extensions and balances with a blend of sensuality and risk. But something went haywire with Megan Fairchild. Dancing with Anthony Huxley, she was overly jovial as an uncharacteristically hammy quality seeped into her performance. Huxley, for his part, stayed the course, dancing with humor, ebullience and good taste.

The elegant, crystalline "Diamonds," set to Tchaikovsky and evoking imperial Russian ballet, came as a relief — though its gleaming blue set is the biggest eyesore of all the "Jewels" décor. (It reminds me of an empty high school swimming pool.) But that could hardly diminish the sophistication of its pas de deux, danced by Sara Mearns and Russell Janzen. They instilled the ballet with an impeccable, understated grandeur. And making their connection even more emotional, more vulnerable, was the knowledge that time is ticking: On Sunday, in the season's final program of "Jewels," Janzen, a standout principal, will give his farewell performance.

After they walked toward each other, meeting at the center of the stage with slow and steady steps, their bodies continued in a pattern of sweeping together and apart. They shaped movement — difficult balances and changes of direction with tricky partnering — with patience and ease, even as decorum slipped into sudden and surprising bursts of feeling. When Janzen finally dropped to a knee beside her and kissed her hand, she looked down at him in surprise — as if the action really *was* a surprise. Nothing felt premeditated, not even their tearful midshow bow.

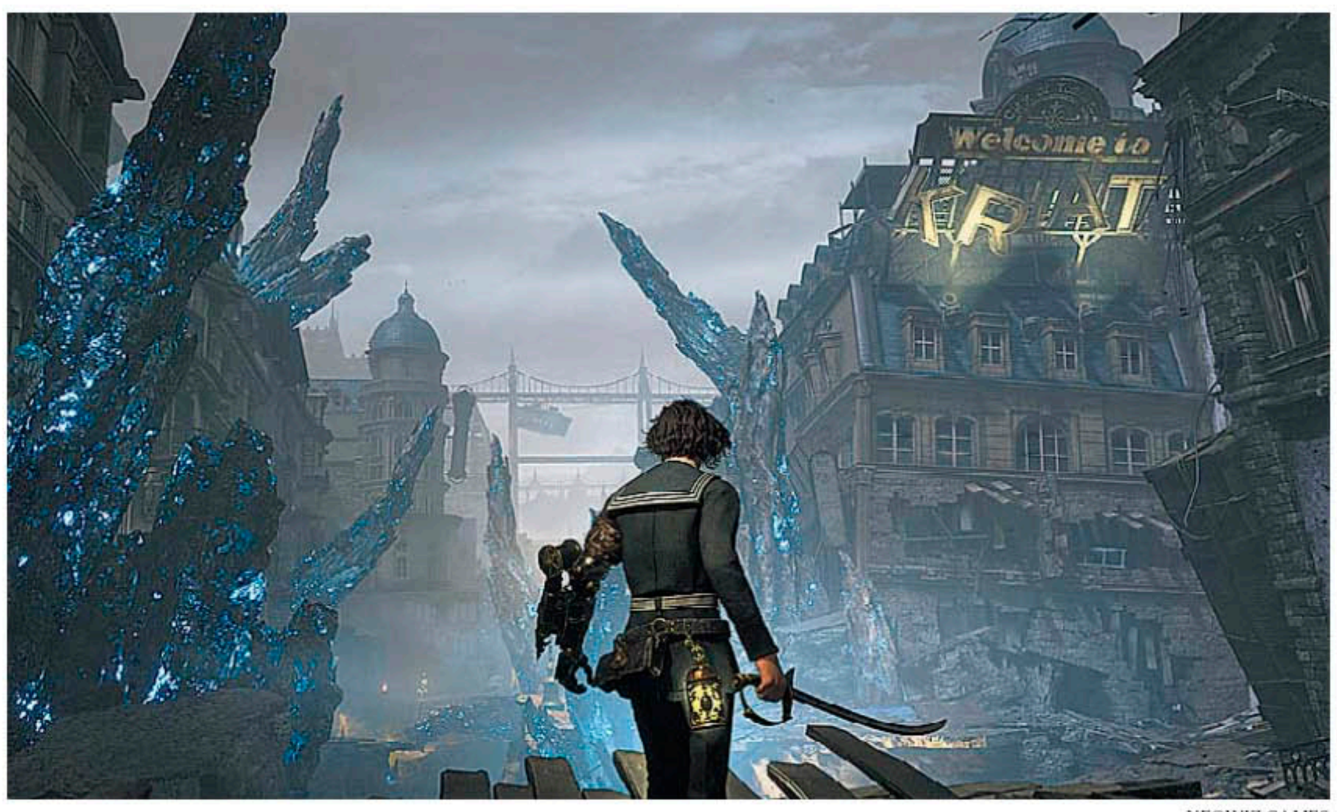
"Jewels" may be referred to as a storyless ballet, but that has never seemed entirely true. Mearns and Janzen's performance felt like proof that it's not. There are unspoken stories in each ballet — streams of them — in which the dancers are not characters but heightened versions of themselves, using a language embroidered with steps, musicality and Balanchine's way of highlighting precisely etched, unaffected dancing.

How does a dancer move through space and time, and how does that create conditions for energy to flow? Ballet, as Kirstein once wrote, depends on dance and "the dancer, dancing whatever is calculated to raise public and performer to some transitory terrestrial paradise."

Watching the ebb and flow of Balanchine's choreography — the patterns and pathways of his "Jewels" — and inside of that, a dancer's instantaneous and intentional response to the music, is like a transference of energy. It's a physical sensation not only to watch but to feel how the internal reverie of "Emeralds" moves into the pleasure and play of "Rubies" and lands in the unflappable world of "Diamonds." Can a dance change the world for the better? With Balanchine, anything's possible.

CRITIC'S PICK
New York City Ballet
Through Oct. 15 at David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center in Manhattan; nycballet.com.

Lies of P belongs to the souls-like action-adventure genre of video games.



NEOWIZ GAMES

Meet Pinocchio the Warrior. No Fib.

The video game Lies of P traces a difficult journey to end a puppet rebellion. Steel will clash.

By JUSTIN PORTER

To challenge the undisputed champion of souls-like video games, a genre acclaimed for its opaque stories, epic boss battles and punishing difficulty, a young South Korean studio turned to an insecure puppet who has a shaky relationship with the truth.

This version of Pinocchio, though, has a mechanical arm that can be fitted with a grappling hook to pull enemies into range or a flame-throwing device that incinerates them.

Jiwon Choi, the director of Lies of P for Round8 Studio, said his team looked for a globally recognizable character with promising lore when it began the project. "The story had everything we were seeking for Lies of P: elements of innocence and gore with dark humor and compelling characters," he wrote in an email.

FromSoftware has had a stranglehold on this style of game since it released Demon's Souls in 2009. Now labeled souls-likes, the games have become a genre unto themselves, known for frequent, cavernous lows and euphoric spikes of victory. FromSoftware's most recent iteration, last year's open-world Elden Ring, sold more than 20 million copies.

Lies of P, which came out on Tuesday for the PC and the past two generations of PlayStation and Xbox consoles, appears to have been inspired by other FromSoftware titles, evoking the gothic horror of Bloodborne and the laser-precise combat of Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice. It has received generally positive reviews but must still convince a die-hard community that it is a real souls-like and not just a wooden imitation.

Transporting ideas from Carlo Collodi's "The Adventures of Pinocchio" into the fictional city of Krat, which is inspired by the belle epoque period, Lies of P presents a dark, lush and terrifying world. A slender shadow in Victorian dress cautiously stalks the streets of a ruined city, sword in hand. Bloody, broken figures are everywhere, and the air is soon punctuated by the shrill sounds of clashing steel.

Souls-likes live and die — and die and die and die — on their combat systems. Lies of P wears its Sekiro and Bloodborne inspirations on its sleeve, requiring the main character, P, to sidestep or parry enemies in frenetic battles with slim margins for error. Perfectly blocking an oncoming strike can wear down the enemies that P encounters, from rank-and-file soldier puppets to hulking bosses, leaving them vulnerable to a powerful attack.

One system that sets Lies of P apart is the ability for players to disassemble weapons into handles and blades and then fuse them in whatever combination they wish. Wielding a giant wrench attached to a saber's hilt may better fit someone's preferred fighting style. "The vast amount of freedom it offers in combat will forge a distinctive gameplay experience," Choi said.

Offering the tools to succeed is a vital component of well-crafted souls-likes, which must overwhelm players while convincing them that victory ultimately rests in their hands. Upsetting that balance can make it feel like trying to win the Daytona 500 on a unicycle.

Souls-like combat has been compared to rhythm and memorization games, where improvement requires learning how enemies fight. If an attack animation feels too random or difficult to read, a fight can come down to luck instead of skill. A game's camera angles can also be a factor, blinding a player to incoming attacks.

Round8 knows it cannot please everyone with the level of difficulty in Lies of P — what frustrates one player captivates another — but the initial sections of the game have been tailored, Choi said, to gently guide players. A shop and a dummy that players can use to practice parrying are placed right before the first boss, although the difficulty ramps up considerably from there.

Lies of P could come the closest of any souls-like this year to nailing FromSoftware's formula; Lords of the Fallen, which failed to shake up the genre when it was first released in 2014, is expected in a new version next month, from Hexworks and CI Games. FromSoftware, which did not respond to a request for comment, has announced an Elden Ring expansion but has not detailed any plans for a Bloodborne or Sekiro sequel. Instead, it turned to one of its oldest franchises this year by releasing Armored Core VI: Fires of Rubicon, a mech combat game.

Geppetto and other aspects of the Pinocchio tale — popularized in the Disney movie from 1940 and explored by many other filmmakers — are woven into Lies of P. In a seeming echo of Isaac Asimov's fictional laws of robotics, the game's puppets are created to serve humans and bound by a series of laws. One says puppets cannot harm humans, a rule that has clearly been broken, and another forces puppets to always tell the truth.

Yet P is different: He can lie, affecting how the game's narrative plays out. In an early encounter, an ill woman asks P to find her baby. When he does, P must decide between a hurtful truth or a compassionate lie. Choi said he hoped that aspect of the game would foster moments of reflection about what it means to be human.

Prestige TV, Toxic Male Power and Ornery Mavericks

Brett Martin reflects on his 2013 book 'Difficult Men' and on how shows have changed.

By MARC TRACY

Tony Soprano, Don Draper and Omar Little glower from the cover of "Difficult Men: Behind the Scenes of a Creative Revolution," Brett Martin's canon-codifying 2013 book about the prestige TV boom of the 2000s. But as difficult and revolutionary as those fictional antiheroes were, the title just as well describes their brilliant, gnomic, sometimes cruel creators, like David Chase ("The Sopranos"), David Simon ("The Wire") and Matthew Weiner ("Mad Men").

"Difficult Men," whose 10th-anniversary edition was published in paperback this summer, is a history of the remarkable moment, starting nearly 25 years ago, when business imperatives and risk-taking executives empowered ornery writers with network experience and chips on their shoulders to create era-defining, artistically lasting programs.

One of the book's through lines was that these shows tended to revolve around men who resembled the way their creators saw themselves: as mavericks taking arms against bureaucratic inertia. It's a theme that Martin, a New Orleans-based journalist, said he might de-emphasize today in favor of delving into the depth and richness of the characters.

"The artistic triumph the original shows allowed," Martin said this month, "was to create all these real human stories and specific, idiosyncratic characters — which is more important than the easy antihero formulation."

The past decade has seen a societal reckoning with misconduct in the culture industries, including television. Some of the showrunner behavior Martin chronicled in his book — icing out disfavored writers, halting entire productions for petty personal whims, throwing tantrums — looks different now.

In a new preface for the anniversary edition, Martin says that if he were writing "Difficult Men" now, he would focus more on "the knotty question of how the same men who provided, in many ways, the most astute critiques of toxic male power that mainstream culture had ever seen could nevertheless end up confirming and recapitulating precisely the same dynamics in their own workplaces."

Even in 2013, Martin held up counterexamples like the showrunners Alan Ball ("Six Feet Under") and Vince Gilligan ("Breaking Bad"), who ran artistically successful programs while being, by all accounts, nice guys and good bosses.

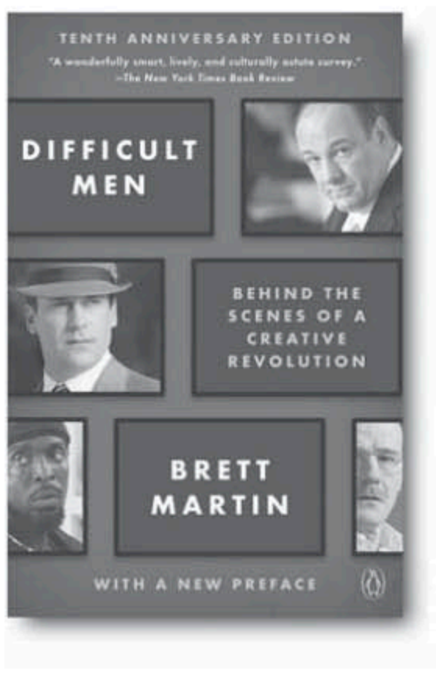
In other respects, 2013 turned out to be a convenient year for a book about this Golden Age of television. It was the year "Breaking Bad" ended and James Gandolfini, the "Sopranos" star, died. And it was the year that "House of Cards," the first original series commissioned by Netflix, debuted. In a phone interview, Martin discussed why the shows he wrote about still hold up and how the emergence of streaming has affected prestige TV. These are edited excerpts from the conversation.



BARRY WETCHER/HBO



CARIN BAER/AMC



Above, Lorraine Bracco and James Gandolfini in "The Sopranos." Left, John Slattery, Jon Hamm and Joel Murray in "Mad Men." Below, Brett Martin's book looks back on the prestige TV boom.

Was there one show that provoked you to write the book?

It was "The Sopranos," in both an abstract and a literal sense. I had been hired to write the official coffee table companion during the final season. I maybe outstayed my welcome, treated it like a real reporting job, was there for quite a long time and got a chance to peek behind the scenes. It was a revelation to me: the size of the operation, the ambition, the way people talked about their work — the sense of something very big being made. The number of times I had to explain what a showrunner was back then is, in and of itself, an indicator of what an alien world that was.

It's such a funny term.

It just occurs to me what kind of a technical term "showrunner" is, how unromantic. It really is something that, like, the Teamsters would come up with. It's so literal and so nonartistic: You keep things running. The term betrays the kind of factory mentality that applied to television at the time.

Did you think of yourself as establishing a canon?

It was very obvious what at least three of the four main shows that I was going to write about were, and most of the peripheral ones as well. In my original proposal, the fourth show was, actually, "Rescue Me" — which is a show whose first few seasons had been perhaps unfairly forgotten but felt very much in keeping with these other shows. It felt extremely daring in being one of the first shows where 9/11 was being treated in a fully rounded way. My first editor pushed me to include "Battlestar Galactica," but it just really wasn't my bag. And then "Breaking Bad" asserted itself as the book was being written and became very obviously the ending place. There were the other HBO shows, and "The Shield" was an important step as well, but there weren't many examples I left out.

Have any of the shows in the book not stood up as much as you expected?

Quite the opposite: The shows you think might have been dated have proven riveting in ways they maybe weren't even when they were on. The America of Tony Soprano, the America of Walter White and very much the America of "The Wire" has proved itself to be the dominant America in the past 20 years. "The Sopranos" became this huge pandemic rewatch, and I think it's because it's so recognizable: The themes — the rot at the center of America, the grift of American life, the anxiety Tony Soprano has — are all super familiar to us now.

Younger generations have adopted "The Sopranos"; it appears in countless memes.

It's great entertainment. It had to be: It had to resemble entertaining network television in many ways. It was still operating as a Trojan horse. It had to be funny and human, and it had to be consumable because the high-art part, the ambition part, was something nobody was looking for.

How did the men you wrote about respond to your book?

I never heard a word from any of them except for Vince Gilligan, who wrote me a beautiful blurb on the back of the new edition. Not surprisingly, because the book ends making the point that one doesn't have to be that difficult to create these wonderful shows.

Few would be interested in defending some of the behavior you document. But does the fact that it happened during the creation of these really great series make any of it easier to accept?

It's hard for me to see how a lack of empathy for people who work for you is a necessary part of the creative process. I do think people's feelings could get hurt in a very intense workplace, and I don't think every hurt feeling is avoidable. But I do think one can maintain a basic level of decency — let alone avoid using your power destructively — and still create quality work. I believe it because I've seen the shows that prove it, and because I'm optimistic.

There are female characters and characters of color in these shows, but the protagonists and the creators behind them are all white men. Does that taint the legacy of that era?

It wasn't a huge surprise that white men writing about white men dominated the first phase of this new world. But the door had been opened. "Orange Is the New Black" came out something like three weeks after my book. "Transparent" was soon after as well. What came after delivered on the promise, which is that all these other kinds of stories were going to be able to be told, and all these other kinds of voices were going to be empowered. "Atlanta" and "Reservation Dogs" are other deliveries on that promise.

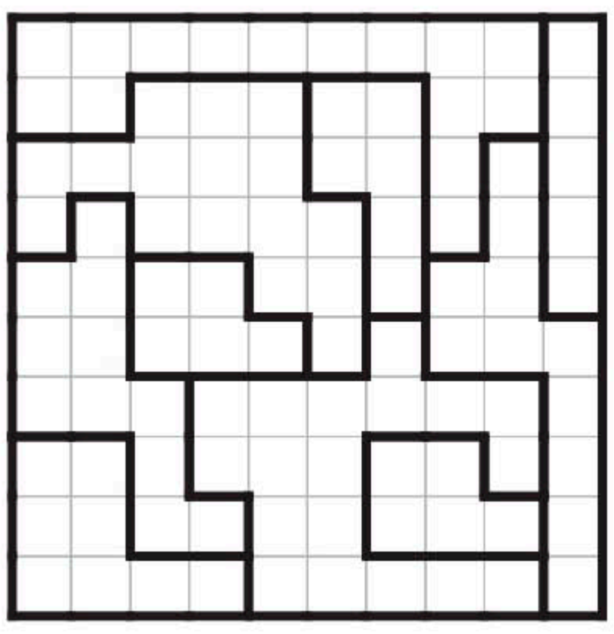
What effect did the rise of streaming platforms, with their hundreds of millions of subscribers, have on Hollywood's appetite for ambitious TV?

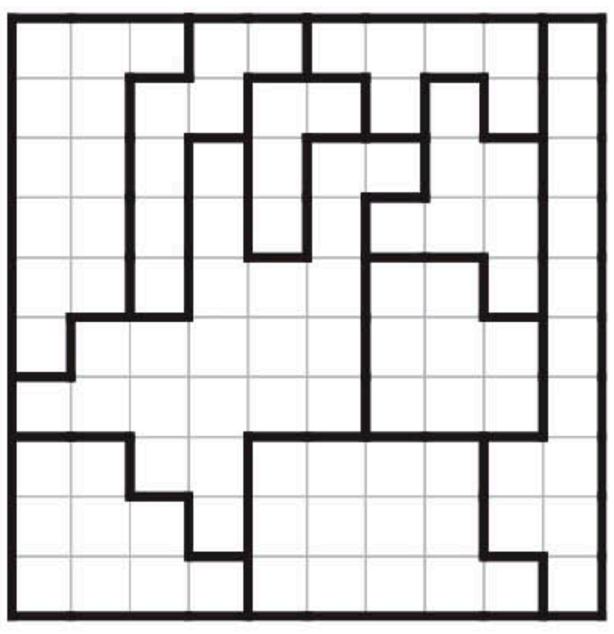
When the book was published, it was more important [to the producers of these early prestige series] to stand out and find the right kinds of viewers than to have the most. It made sense that that attitude moved from subscription cable to basic — in my book, it's HBO to FX and AMC — and streaming seemed it would be another step in that. But it does seem as though every piece that I identified as being crucial to the invention of this new TV is now a flash point in the writers' strike: shorter seasons, writer-producers, writers' rooms. And it's depressing. With all the stuff that looked great, the streamers saw there were opportunities for cost savings.

Are there ways streaming made TV better for viewers?

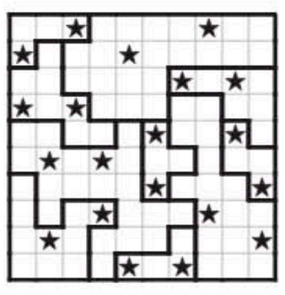
Oh, my God. Look how much work we got! So much that I can't keep up — that I feel a constant sense of anxiety about missing things. Look how many new voices we got. That's been the trade-off.

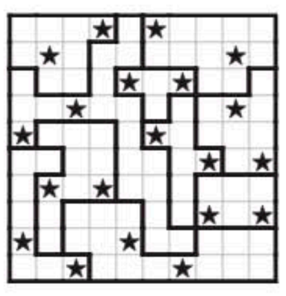
Two Not Touch





ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES





Put two stars in each row, column and region of the grid. No two stars may touch, not even diagonally.

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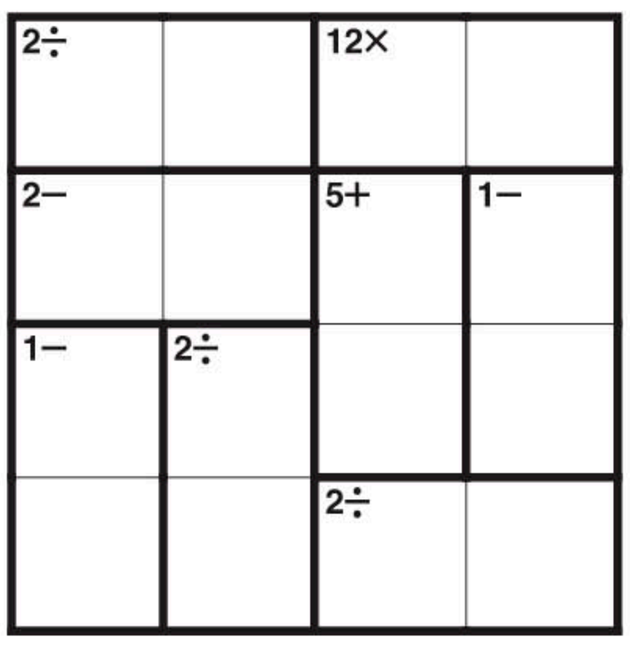
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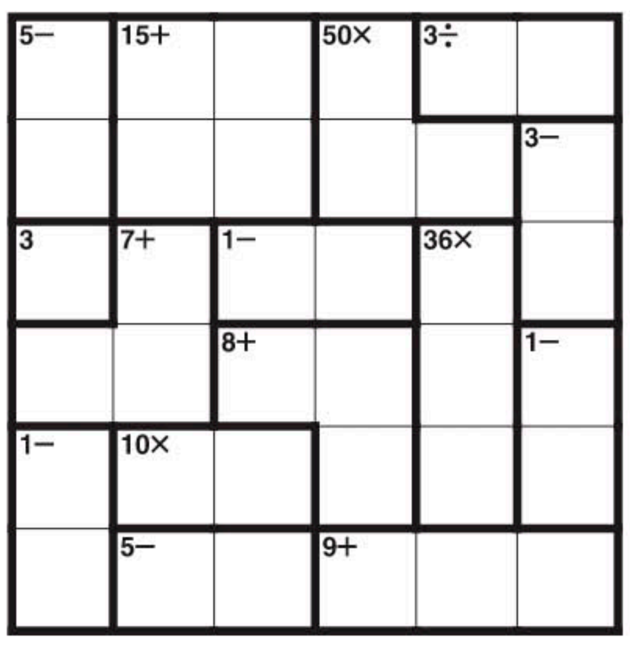
QD ZJOC-HY-ZJOC GUJSB, WSUBQIUDH ZQFF OFQDHYD VYD ZUBH BWYCUD VYSI JFZML XSJLLG JVJSIB.

PUZZLE BY BEN BASS

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER Roof --> floor

KenKen





ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES

1	2	4	3
2	3	1	4
4	1	3	2
3	4	2	1

4	5	2	6	3	1
5	1	3	2	6	4
6	4	5	1	2	3
1	2	4	3	5	6
3	6	1	5	4	2
2	3	6	4	1	5

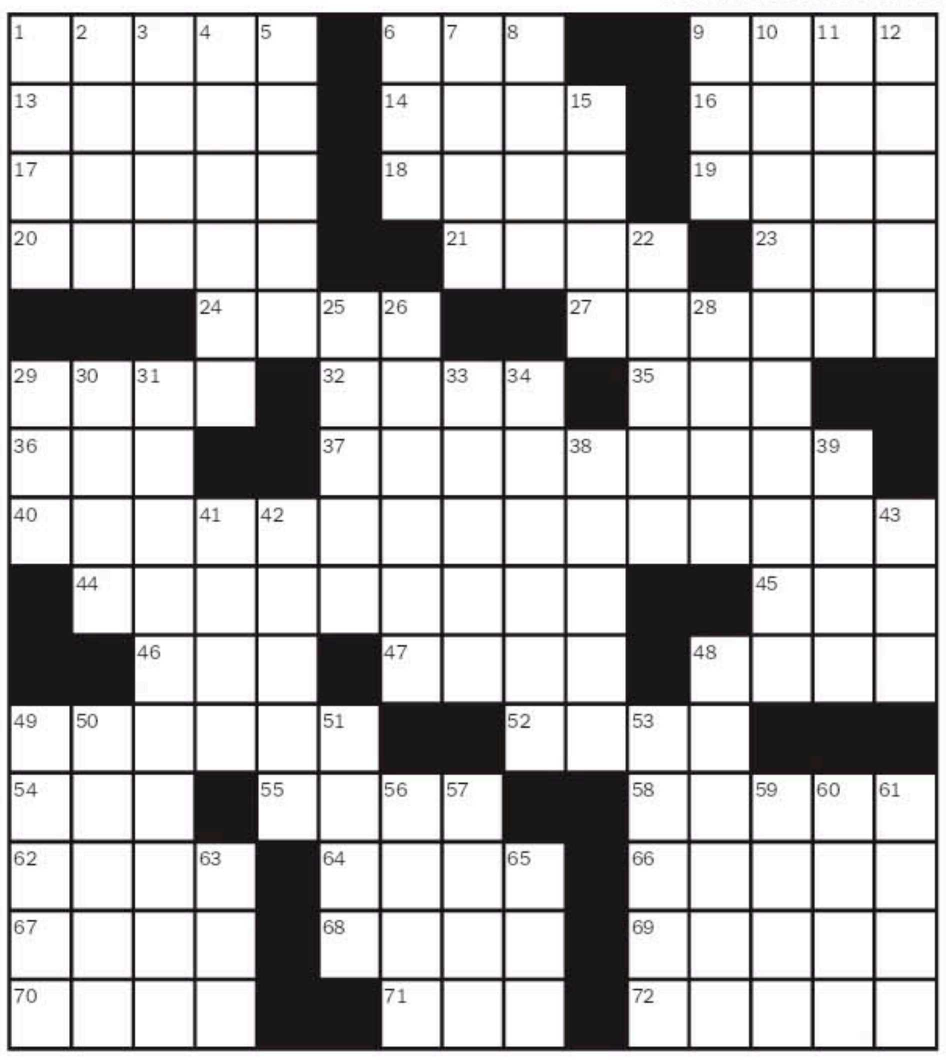
Fill the grid with digits so as not to repeat a digit in any row or column, and so that the digits within each heavily outlined box will produce the target number shown, by using addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, as indicated in the box. A 4x4 grid will use the digits 1-4. A 6x6 grid will use 1-6.

For more games: www.nytimes.com/games

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Crossword | Edited by Will Shortz

PUZZLE BY DAN CAPRERA



9/21/23

ACROSS

1 Director who said "Horror films don't create fear. They release it"
6 Center cut?
9 Length just over one centimeter
13 Entertainment one might view from a box
14 Half of a rhyming game name
16 Mine, in Marseille
17 Desert near Sinai
18 Indecent
19 "It's a ___"
20 Natural find with a cavity
21 Whole alternative
23 Major Japanese company HQ'd in a 43-story tower shaped like a rocket
24 Capital of Washington?
27 Rubber overshoe
29 Shows indecision, in a way
32 ___ Verde, national park in Colorado
35 Org. concerned with cyberwarfare
36 Melber of MSNBC
37 Infamous presidential denial
40 Seasonal phenomenon depicted six times in this puzzle
44 Gave advice
45 Desire for a lonely hart?
46 Childish Gambino's record label
47 He actually died about 1,500 years before the fiddle was invented
48 Quizzes
49 "The $10,000 Pyramid" host
52 Person who might call a child a bairn
54 "This again?!"
55 Tea brand
58 How some money is held
62 Be overly sweet
64 Classic N.Y.C. cinema name
66 Food that can be eaten to help with anemia
67 Sprinted
68 Place for a brace
69 Día de los Reyes month
70 Drink that should not be served shaken
71 Tonsil treater, in brief
72 Freshen

DOWN

1 Third-most common Chinese surname in America
2 Competitive poker?
3 State flower of Utah
4 Guiding statements
5 Jet black, as hair
6 ___ de mer
7 They may precede cries of "GOOOOAAAAL!"
8 Peddle
9 Isn't out of
10 Our bodies need 20+ different kinds to function
11 Some seating sections
12 Lawyer in "To Kill a Mockingbird"
15 Cool cat's "Copy that"
22 Wide ray
25 Male members of the House of Saud
26 Some people on deck
28 Its lowest score is 120, in brief
29 Show indecision, in a way
30 Name of seven Danish kings
31 D-F-A is one, in music
33 What you do just for grins?
34 Ticks off
38 Many a surgeon, informally
39 Corner piece
41 Conceal, with "away"
42 Pass
43 The Legend of Zelda console, in brief
48 When many businesses open
49 Passageways
50 Structure built in a catenary arch shape
51 On a ___
53 Edmonton N.H.L. player
56 Ending with euro
57 Animals on Nebraska's state quarter
59 Like some numbers and scores
60 Withered, climate-wise
61 Toot one's own horn
63 "___, verily"
65 Up to this point

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

I	S	S	A		T	A	R	O	T		A	T	O	M
M	O	C	S		O	L	I	V	E		R	A	V	E
B	L	A	C	K	M	A	G	I	C		F	L	E	A
A	D	M	I	R	E	R		S	H	E		E	R	G
C	O	P		A	I	M	S			R	E	N	E	E
K	N	I	C	K		S	U	P	E	R	S	T	A	R
			L	O	B		N	E	E		P	E	T	
		P	O	W	E	R	B	A	L	L	A	D		
	P	A	C		S	U	E		S	I	N			
R	O	C	K	E	T	M	A	N		F	A	R	E	S
A	L	I	S	T			M	O	A	T		A	L	T
R	E	F		A	S	H		S	T	E	A	M	E	R
E	N	I	D		H	I	G	H	E	R	L	O	V	E
S	T	E	M		A	D	I	O	S		O	N	E	S
T	A	R	S		M	E	A	N	T		T	A	N	S

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Jann Wenner was a powerful figure at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, which he co-founded. But on Saturday, its board swiftly removed him from the hall's foundation after he made remarks criticized as racist and misogynistic.

KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Jann Wenner's Reign Was Toppled in Minutes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

for an emergency meeting at 5 p.m. Eastern time. The sole topic on the agenda: a vote on ejecting Wenner.

Wenner responded with a last-minute plea for clemency. "I understand how inflammatory these words appear," he wrote in an email, "but it is not how I feel in my heart nor have acted in all my years founding and leading the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame."

But in a conference-call vote that took just 20 minutes, the motion passed with only two nay votes. One came from Wenner himself, and the other from Jon Landau, Bruce Springsteen's manager and a former Rolling Stone critic, who long held a key role at the hall as chairman of the nominating committee.

"Jann's statements were indefensible and counter to all the hall stands for," Landau said in a statement. "It became clear that the vote to remove him from the board would be justifiably and correctly overwhelming. My vote was intended as a gesture in acknowledgment of all that he had done to create the hall in the first place."

It was a stunning fall for Wenner, who, through his command of both Rolling Stone and the Rock Hall, long held a powerful perch in the music industry, able to affect artists' careers based on his tastes or whims. Those biases collided with efforts by the hall's new leadership to address criticism that it has failed to adequately include women and minorities in its pantheon.

In the Times interview, conducted by David Marchese, Wenner, 77, explained why his new book, "The Masters" — a collection of his interviews over the years with rock stars like Bob Dylan, Mick Jagger and Springsteen, mostly from the pages of Rolling Stone — included no women or people of color as subjects. He said that none were "as articulate enough on this intellectual level," and that he did not view them as "philosophers of rock."

"You know, just for public relations sake," he added, "maybe I should have gone and found one Black and one woman artist to include here that didn't measure up to that same historical standard, just to avert this kind of criticism. Which, I get it. I had a chance to do that. Maybe I'm old-fashioned and I don't give a [expletive] or whatever."

Those comments drew immediate fire on social media. Just as quickly, alarmed phone calls and emails began circulating among the 31 board members of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Foundation, which includes music and media executives, players from the finance world and star artists including Pharrell Williams and LL Cool J. (The foundation, created in 1983, chooses the artists who are inducted, and is affiliated with the museum in Cleveland.)

"Your words run the risk of undermining the very institution you helped build by propagating a narrative that isn't just narrow but also exclusionary," Troy Carter, a former Spotify executive and adviser to the Prince estate, told Wenner in an email to board members that was obtained by The Times.

Interviews with four people with direct knowledge of the board vote, who spoke anonymously because the panel's deliberations are confidential, paint a picture of urgency and rage inside the institution.

While board members felt personally appalled by Wenner's comments, they were also worried about the impact on the hall itself, and its vital relationships with artists — some of whom were already beginning to complain. One missive came from Bernie Taupin, Elton John's longtime songwriting partner, who is set to receive the musical excellence award at this year's ceremony on Nov. 3 at Barclays Center in Brooklyn. Heather Taupin, his wife and manager, sent an email to hall officials calling Wenner's comments "a slap in the face" to inductees and adding, "We feel very strongly he should immediately resign."

Although the hall oversees the voting that selects the winners, delicate diplomacy often happens behind the scenes to ensure that artists will accept the honor and appear on its annual induction TV show. This year's honorees include Kate Bush, Missy Elliott, Willie Nelson, Sheryl Crow, Rage Against the Machine, the Spinners and George Michael, who died in 2016.

At the board meeting, a few members expressed their dismay over Wenner's comments. Wenner also spoke briefly, though his remarks failed to sway the assembled directors, who include some of music's most powerful figures at major record labels, music publishers and in the touring world.

The entire meeting was over in about 20 minutes, and the hall then announced the decision with a brief statement. The vote to remove Wenner took effect immediately.

Representatives of the hall declined to release any vote details other than that there was a quorum of at least 16 people on the call, as required by the organization's bylaws.

Wenner did not respond to a request for comment. In a statement issued Saturday evening, he said, in part: "In my interview with The New York Times I made comments that diminished the contributions, genius and impact of Black and women artists and I apologize wholeheartedly for those remarks."

In casting their votes, the board members may have been focusing solely on Wenner's recent interview. But the extent of his influence over the Hall of Fame has long been seen by some as a liability for the institution.

In "Sticky Fingers: The Life and Times of Jann Wenner and Rolling Stone Magazine" (2017), a ruthlessly critical biography by Joe Hagan, Wenner was quoted openly describing a kind of autocratic control over the hall. "In a sense, it's owned by Rolling Stone; it's a creation of Rolling Stone," Wenner said. "It's unfair to some people to say that. But that's what it is. It's my thing."

The Rock Hall has long disputed that position, arguing that its internal processes, while opaque, are properly democratic and fair. Many artists and their business representatives, however, have scoffed at that (at least until being inducted).

Even as complaints about the lack of diversity in the hall began to grow louder over the last decade — according to a detailed study in 2019, just 7.7 percent of the people inducted into the hall up to that point were women — Wenner dismissed the critique.

The fallout from Wenner's ouster was immediate. Rolling Stone, which Wenner left in 2019, distanced itself from its founder. His son Gus, now Rolling Stone's chief executive, told staffers in an email: "While I love him deeply, I do not agree with the comments he made and understand why they are so upsetting and hurtful."

But his legacy has not been erased. A representative of Penske Media Corporation, which owns the magazine, said that Wenner's name would remain on the masthead as co-founder.

Little, Brown, publisher of "The Masters," has not changed its publication plan to release the book on Tuesday.



On Wednesday, September 20th 2023, JH Arts Corporation hosted The National Chorus of Korea led by Maestro EuiJoong Yoon who performed the choral epic; 'Hunminjeongeum' in its U.S. premiere at Lincoln Center's, David Geffen Hall. 'Hunminjeongeum' is a composition that reflects Korea's rich cultural history. This masterpiece combines elements of Eastern and Western traditions, seamlessly blending orchestral music, traditional Korean instruments, choral arrangements and the sounds of Korean tradition, offering a creative and fantastic harmony that embodies the essence of K-Classical music.

'Hunminjeongeum' is a creative work based on Hangeul (the Korean alphabet), which is evaluated as the world's most scientific alphabet and is recognized by the linguists all around the world, and Korea's great heritage 'Hunminjeongeum', was developed by Euijoong Yoon, artistic director of the National Chorus of Korea, as part of the creative cantata project and has been praised for presenting a new paradigm of choral music. Originally premiered in 2021, 'Hunminjeongeum' received enthusiastic support from critics and audiences alike and was invited to major national events such as the opening celebration of the Gwangju Biennale and the Gangneung World Choral Competition.

JH Arts Corporation's CEO, Jinho Hwang, showcased exceptional creative planning skills, while director Jinsun An's direction, known for its striking collaboration between visual arts and classical music, delivered an outstanding performance of 'Hunminjeoneum' to a captivated audience.

This evening was made possible and sponsored by The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and Korean Cultural Center New York

The National Chorus of Korea is the country's first professional chorus and its leading choral organization was founded in 1973 with the main objective of pursuing the professional and artistic aspects of choral singing. In 2000, the National Chorus of Korea became an independent art organization under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and restarted as an incorporated foundation. Currently, the chorus performs five subscription concerts and over sixty performances annually, including project concerts, provincial concerts, overseas concerts, guest appearances, and official events. Currently, the chorus is being led by its 11th Artistic Director, Dr. Euijoong Yoon, who is devoted to strengthening and implementing the National Chorus of Korea's musical mission and artistic vision. He has led the National Chorus of Korea through various ambitious programs such as The Great Choral Series, K-Choral Classic Series, and Creative Choral Collections.

http://nationalchorus.or.kr/en/

Euijoong Yoon, Artistic Director
The National Chorus of Korea
Symphony Orchestra of New Jersey
Byunghee Oh, Composer
Gye Seok Tak, Scenarist
Jisun An, Dramatist & General Director
Jin Choo Kim, Baritone
Bonggeun Lee, Korean traditional Singer

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THE INVENTOR 11:30AM, 2:00, 4:30, 7:00(OC), 9:30PM
ARISTOTLE & DANTE DISCOVER THE SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE 12:40, 3:00PM
BOTTOMS 10:15AM, 12:30, 2:45, 5:00, 7:15, 8:15, 9:30PM
THEATER CAMP 10:45AM, 1:00, 5:40(OC)PM
PAST LIVES 11:45AM, 2:15, 4:45(OC), 7:20, 9:45PM
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LAURA COLLINS-HUGHES | CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

A.I.-Scripted Stories Are Taking the Stage

'Prometheus Firebringer' and 'Bioadapted' are among the new works testing the waters.

SEATED BEHIND A PLAIN wooden table, the theater maker Annie Dorsen is not costumed to catch our gaze, or lit dramatically. In the performance-lecture that is her A.I.-focused show "Prometheus Firebringer," at the Polonsky Shakespeare Center in Brooklyn, you might assume she'd be the boring part.

Off to her right are her co-stars: a giant 3-D-printed mask of a human head with video screens for eyes, and a flock of smaller masks — faces that seem straight out of a horror film, with gaping black mouths and creepy blank eyes that are milky white windows to nonexistent souls.

"It's all made with A.I.," Dorsen tells us. "Not what I'm saying. But the other stuff." Jerking a casual thumb in their direction, she adds: "The masks. Their voices. What they say."

The flashy element of this production, presented by Theater for a New Audience, is a speculative version of a lost part of Aeschylus' ancient Prometheus trilogy, created using artificial intelligence: GPT-3.5. Algorithms have been a tool in Dorsen's work for more than a decade, but her latest piece coincides with an accelerating worry about the power of A.I. — even by some who have helped to build it — and a number of current and upcoming shows both use and scrutinize it. (Next month brings "Artificial Flavors" from the Civilians at 59E59 Theaters and "dSimon" by Simon Senn and Tammara Leites at the Crossing the Line Festival.)

As the audience settles in at "Prometheus Firebringer," A.I.-scripted stories — or rather, variations on the same brief story — unfurl on a large electronic screen above the stage. Generated before each performance, the text at the show I saw told of "the god Zeus and the Titan Prometheus," as one version phrased it, and a "chorus of human orphan children."

Mainly what you need to know for this show is the familiar beginning of the tale: Prometheus, a tricksy demigod, stole fire from Zeus and gave it to the grateful human race. How humans harness the technology at their disposal is the true subject of "Prometheus Firebringer," in which Dorsen becomes her own Greek chorus, warning of, commenting on and lamenting a 21st-century tragedy that we are allowing to befall us.

The 45-minute show, intercutting her brightly lighted talk with the moodily lit, robotic-sounding, speculative fragment of the trilogy, is less than riveting as a practical demonstration of A.I. The GPT-3.5 text at the performance I saw was blandly unremarkable, a technological party trick with ventriloquized masks. The playlet sans humans is remote and inert, inherently a simulacrum of drama.

There's a clumsiness to it, and a lack of clarity. I wondered at one point if the voice coming from the large mask had spoken the name Prometheus in error, like an amateur who says the character name before reading a line of dialogue.

But Dorsen's lecture is forcefully beneficial as an examination of our obeisance to technology: the cultural tendency to genuflect and acquiesce to it, reflecting a faith that it is not only superior to humans but also inevitably dominant over us. As if the tech lords were in charge of what we all become, no matter how the rest of us feel about it or what we lose.

"One lesson of tragedy, then, is that we conspire with our fate," Dorsen says.

True though those words are, they are not hers. In a monologue sewn together entirely from borrowed scraps of other thinkers' thoughts, the sentence is from the philosopher Simon Critchley's 2019 book, "Tragedy, the Greeks, and Us." It's one of a legion of sources cited during the show, the author names and titles projected behind Dorsen as she speaks.

This is form as provocation, courting the objection that she might as well be crawling the internet, gobbling up whatever is there and regurgitating it, dumbed down and plagiarized. But Dorsen is doing, however extremely, what artists have always done: gathering, sampling, synthesizing to create something wholly new.

Susan Sontag, in "Regarding the Pain of Others" (2003), is Dorsen's source when she says that "even in the era of cybermodels, what the mind feels like is still as the ancients imagined it, an inner space — like a theater — in which we picture, and it is these pictures which allow us to remember."

Currently embodying that notion at Here, in Manhattan, is a show that feels like a warm and pulsing counterpoint to all things A.I.: Normandy Sherwood's vividly trippy, richly theatrical "Psychic Self Defense." Promotional materials describe it as part "live action screen saver," but it is so much more a reverie.



DINARA KHAIROVA



SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES



MARIA BARANOVA

From top, "Bioadapted," at Culture Lab LIC; in "Prometheus Firebringer," at Polonsky Shakespeare Center, Annie Dorsen becomes her own Greek chorus; Normandy Sherwood's "Psychic Self Defense," at Here, is nearly wordless.

Nearly wordless, this is a primal dreamscape of a show, set within a proscenium where one curtain opens to reveal another and another and another, a lush symphony of textures, patterns, colors. Giant tassels with actors inside them have a dance, as if they have just wandered in from the castle in "Beauty and the Beast." Miniatures of the proscenium set appear, and comic puppetry erupts inside them.

Playful, silly, teasing, bizarre, this is a work so thrillingly human-made, from so deep in the infinite strangeness of the human mind, that its maverick creativity seems out of reach of the artificial. I hope it is, anyway.

The depth of that reach is the concern of "Bioadapted," Tjasa Ferme's sleekly designed, thoughtfully assembled but ultimately overstuffed show at Culture Lab LIC in Long Island City, Queens.

Like Dorsen, Ferme incorporates A.I. into the performance in ways that, deliberately or not, demonstrate its incompetence; a country song, generated with a few prompts from the audience, was easily the most nails-on-a-chalkboard country song I've ever heard. But "Bioadapted," constructed from documentary and dramatic text, may get you thinking concretely about the ways A.I. can warp our perception of reality, surveil our very interiors, take what belongs to us.

Both "Bioadapted" and "Prometheus Firebringer" ask audiences to consider what Dorsen — taking a line from the French philosopher Bernard Stiegler's "The Age of Disruption: Technology and Madness in Computational Capitalism" (2019) — calls "the fundamental ethical question, the question of knowing whether this is the world we want."

Dorsen and Ferme are nudging us to abandon our passivity, curb the excesses of A.I. and create the society we want rather than submitting to some grim techno future that we assume is inevitable.

"As long as there is time, there is time for care," Dorsen says.

She plucked that line from the Swedish writer Axel Andersson. And he's right.

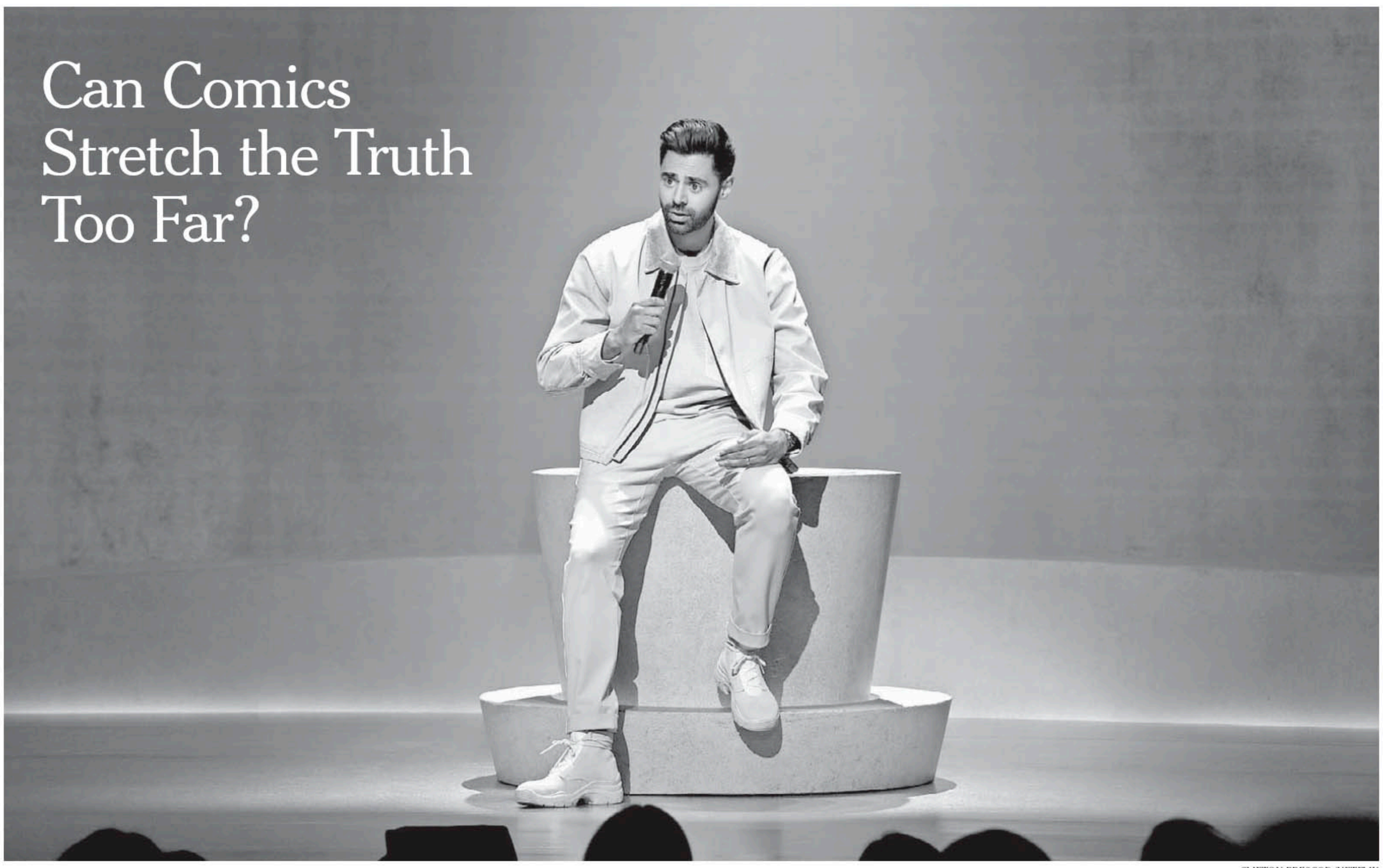
Prometheus Firebringer
Through Oct. 1 at the Polonsky Shakespeare Center in Brooklyn; tfana.org. Running time: 45 minutes.

Psychic Self Defense
Through Sept. 30 at Here in Manhattan; here.org. Running time: 1 hour.

Bioadapted
Through Sunday at Culture Lab LIC in Queens; transformatheatre.com. Running time: 1 hour 40 minutes.

JASON ZINOMAN | ON COMEDY

Can Comics Stretch the Truth Too Far?



CLIFTON PRESCOD/NETFLIX

Hasan Minhaj's stories lean on fiction to put himself closer to the center of news stories, making him seem more brave or wronged.

Telling an 'emotional truth' or just ignoring the facts?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

but that Minhaj never met him. Minhaj defended his fabrications as fibs in service to "emotional truth." For someone in the running to be the next host of "The Daily Show," that term sounds a little too much like Kellyanne Conway's euphemism "alternative facts."

Amid plenty of critics online, Whoopi Goldberg was one of the few major figures who spoke up for Minhaj, saying on "The View" that embellishing in the name of a larger truth is what comics do. But here is where some more context would be helpful.

Stand-up comedy was never expected to be factually accurate. Rodney Dangerfield, to be clear, got respect. In the setups for early jokes, Richard Pryor lied about having a Puerto Rican mother and living in a Jewish tenement. An old-school observational comic like Jerry Seinfeld has said all his comedy is made up, even his opinions.

But in the past few decades, with the rise of "The Daily Show," which has blurred lines between comedy and the news, as well as the proliferation of confessional solo shows that depend on dramatic revelations that dovetail nicely with jokes, the form has evolved and so have audiences' assumptions. And they vary wildly depending on the artist.

In Sebastian Maniscalco's last special, "Is It Me?," he told a story poking fun at a kid in his child's class who identifies as a lion. Asked by The Daily Beast, he said that this wasn't true, but that he used it because it puts "a mirror on society" — another kind of emotional truth. Minhaj's inventions were part of the same tradition, one that deserves new scrutiny.

It's also important to point out that many current comics think seriously about their fictions, setting their own code. "I am quite strict about telling the truth," Daniel Kitson once told me. "I am interested in engaging emotionally and I don't want to be duplicitous."

In an interview with Taylor Tomlinson this year, she told me she cut a joke about being single after she started dating someone because even that minor white lie made her uncomfortable. Many other comics, like Kate Berlant, build unreliability into their acts. Others lie so overtly that it sets expectations. What's tricky is that there is no one industry standard.

The reality is that some comics have more leeway toying with the truth than others. All artists teach their audience how to view them, by the way they tell jokes, their style, the level of absurdity. What makes Hasan Minhaj such a troubling example is that his style, onstage and often off in interviews, suggested we should believe him.

Minhaj is known for using visual aids the way a journalist would. He mixes clips of television news and photos from his life with a general tone of sincerity. The nature of his deceptions was peculiar. He didn't invent stuff to make himself funnier. He did it to raise the stakes in the easiest, most self-regarding way possible. Lying in comedy isn't necessarily wrong. But how you lie matters. Minhaj has told a story about his prom date reneging on the day of the dance because her parents didn't want her seen in photos with a "brown boy." He now admits to some untruths in this story, but not all, and left her perspective out. (The woman has said she and her family faced online threats for years.) This genre of fiction is a shortcut to sympathy, an unearned tug at the heartstrings. It's not a capital crime, but it's an unnecessary and risky one.

Lies involving real people should add a new sense of obligation. The problem with only considering the standard of emotional truth is that it can blind you to the impact on the actual world outside your emotions. You could say that the emotional truth behind the Patriot Act was that the terrorism of Sept. 11 required extreme tactics to feel safe, but that doesn't make the legislation right. The truth is usually more complex than the way you feel about it.

Watching "The King's Jester" now hits differently. In some ways, it's more interesting than the first time I saw it, when it seemed mawkish. Some jokes, like his desperation for social media clout, seem like clues. And others come across as the work of a guilty conscience, like the moment when Minhaj faces the audience and says, "Everything here is built on trust."

This is the truth. Every comic has an unspoken pact with the audience. The one Seinfeld has is different from Minhaj's, and part of the reason has nothing to do with their intentions. Whether or not critics like me think authenticity is important, it matters to the audience. So does honesty. And comics understand that. It's no accident that many of the political comedians working today, especially on television, employ researchers from traditional news sources. Getting facts right matters, especially when the comedy is about grave social issues.

That's not just because a comic's credibility can take a hit. When stories told about racism, religious profiling or transgender identity are exposed as inventions, that can lead to doubt about the experiences of real people.

When the storyteller Mike Daisey, making an argument about factory conditions in China, said he visited a sweatshop even though he hadn't, the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party used the resulting scandal to try to discredit all reporting by Western media. This kind of argument has only become more common. Look at Russell Brand's defense against accusations of rape and grooming: He tried to discredit his accusers by saying you can't trust the mainstream media.

One of the most notable aspects of the Minhaj story is the lack of nuance in his response, the complete confidence he projects. It's striking that he seemingly has no concerns about possibly deceiving some of his audience. His special is about his wife challenging him to take responsibility for how his words can negatively affect his family. One wonders if there will be any more introspection.

In the summer, Minhaj interviewed former President Barack Obama and began by bringing up his annual best-of lists, skeptically asking if he really consumes all of those books, albums and movies. When Obama said he did, Minhaj pushed back: "No, you didn't."

Later on his podcast "Working It Out," Mike Birbiglia asked Minhaj how he could be so bold with the ex-president. Minhaj said his question for Obama was "innocuous." That seems like naïveté masquerading as savvy.

If Obama admitted to lying about even something that inconsequential, it would be a global story. We live in a world where people have long peddled conspiracies about him and would jump on any deception as evidence of some broader scandal. There's a temptation to respond to the onslaught of lies by thinking that the only way to fight back is to lie some more. But that has it wrong. To quote Minhaj, everything is built on trust.

That trust operates differently for politicians and journalists than for artists, but it matters for us all. Treat it carelessly and the price can be steep.

Songs of Hope and Sorrow, Now Sung by One Man

Mateus Aleluia, the last active member of the Brazilian group Os Tincoãs, embodies its spirit.

By CARLOS ALBUQUERQUE

RIO DE JANEIRO — In May, a crowd of 3,000 filled the Utopia Warehouse at the old port of Rio de Janeiro for the opening night of Back2Black, a festival dedicated to Black culture. A figure dressed in white sat onstage, guitar in hand, and the imposing baritone voice of Mateus Aleluia — the only active member of Os Tincoãs, a group from Bahia, Brazil, revered for its heavenly vocal harmonies and songs about the Yoruba mythology — reverberated throughout the venue. He sang about birds, waterfalls and mystical beings. And also about oppression, suffering and the pain of racism.

When Aleluia suddenly stopped singing and opened his arms, the crowd understood the signal and sang back to him the lyrics of "Cordeiro de Nanã," the band's 1977 lament about slavery. "You guys know the lyrics better than I do," he said with a smile, and left the stage to cheers, leaning on a crutch.

"Because of my age, I represent prudence, and those kids who showed up to sing with me on the show represent impetus. I think it's a good match," Aleluia said by phone the day after the concert. (He turns 80 this month; he declined to specify the date.)

Despite the singalong, Os Tincoãs were never pop stars in Brazil. Far from it. The group comes from Cachoeira, in the Bahia countryside, a city that housed a large concentration of enslaved people cultivating sugar cane during the 16th century. Their three main albums, "Os Tincoãs" (1973), "O Africanto dos Tincoãs" (1975) and "Os Tincoãs" (1977), were not successful when they were released, and the band split in the early 1980s. But now, Os Tincoãs — which took its name from a bird with a long tail and a call similar to the moan of a cat that's common in the forests around Cachoeira — is being rediscovered by Brazilian audiences and a new generation of artists. And "Canto Coral Afrobrasileiro," an album recorded 40 years ago, has finally been released.

This "lost" Tincoãs album features the band accompanied by a traditional choir, the Coral dos Correios e Telégrafos do Rio de Janeiro. The idea came from Os Tincoãs' producer at the time, the radio D.J. and researcher Adelzon Alves, who dreamed of creating a kind of Afro-Brazilian gospel.

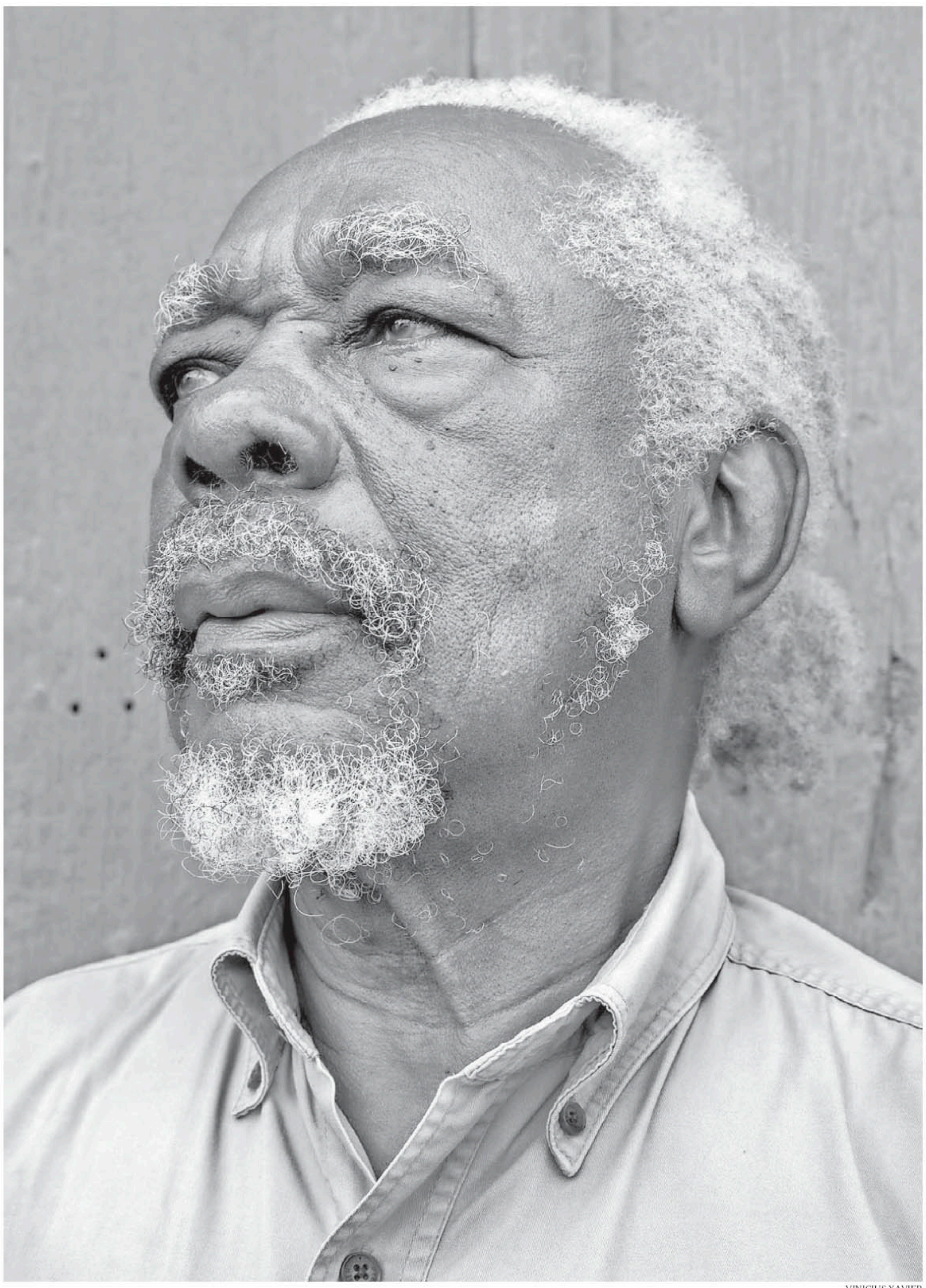
"We noticed that there was a link between the sugar cane fields we have in Cachoeira and the cotton plantations in the U.S.A. South," Aleluia said in an earlier interview at a hotel in Copacabana, a district of Rio de Janeiro, in February. "Adelzon helped us realize that there was a lot in common between Africa on this side and Africa on that side."

"The difference is in the way we relate to religion," he added. "In Brazil, we always look for syncretisms and kinships. That's why we linked the Afro with the Baroque in the Tincoãs' songs. And on this album, the idea was that we had our voices multiplied with the help of the choir."

Os Tincoãs started out performing boleros in 1961. Their first album, "Meu Último Bolero" from 1962, was recorded in Rio with Dadinho (guitar and vocals), Heraldo (percussion and vocals) and Erivaldo (percussion and vocals). When the group returned to Cachoeira and took a decade-long pause from recording, each member focused on activities outside of music. Os Tincoãs resurfaced in 1973 with Aleluia, who was a teacher, replacing Erivaldo.

The band put the boleros aside and renewed its repertoire, adopting the sound that would bring it a cult audience: beautiful vocal harmonies (think the Beach Boys in Bahia) and a mix of samba and capoeira chants and spiritual songs, written in Portuguese and Yoruba, which evoked the Afro-Brazilian religion of Candomblé.

"Os Tincoãs have always enchanted me since I was a little girl when I heard my mother sing the group's songs," said Margareth Menezes, Brazil's minister of culture, who is also a musician, in a phone interview. "They represent the African roots of Brazilian music."



VINICIUS XAVIER

Mateus Aleluia, of the band Os Tincoãs. "Canto Coral Afrobrasileiro," an album the band recorded 40 years ago, is now being released.

Despite critical praise, appearances at festivals and the recognition of artists like João Gilberto — who recorded a version of the group's "Cordeiro de Nanã" alongside Maria Bethânia, Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil — Os Tincoãs did not take off. In 1983, the group (with a new member, Badu, replacing Heraldo) traveled to Angola, accompanying the sambista Martinho da Vila. The tour was supposed to last a week, but Aleluia and Dadinho decided to stay in the African country after the shows.

"We found another Bahia in Angola," Aleluia explained. Dissatisfied with the duo's decision, Badu returned to Brazil, precipitating the end of the group.

During the almost 20 years that Aleluia lived in Angola, he worked as a researcher and art teacher. Dadinho, who had opened a bakery in Luanda, the capital, died in 2000 of a stroke. With their three main albums out of circulation, Os Tincoãs seemed doomed to be forgotten.

But in the 2000s, record diggers and D.J.s began to compete for the few available vinyl copies of the band's albums in Rio, São Paulo and Salvador record stores. Little by little, its music began to echo in the work of artists from new generations, such as the Afrobeat group Bixiga 70 and the rappers Criolo and Emicida, who sought to bring more Brazilian elements to their work.

'Os Tincoãs revolutionized Brazilian music by harmonizing Afro-religious singing.'
EMICIDA
RAPPER

"Os Tincoãs revolutionized Brazilian music by harmonizing Afro-religious singing," Emicida, 37, said in an email interview. "They represent an insurgent Brazil that, despite being a victim of the worst colonial ills, never gave up on producing beauty. The group's work is an inexhaustible source of inspiration for me, even more so now when the country is experiencing recognition of Black culture."

Last year, the D.J. and producer Diogo Strausz, 33, released a groovy version of "Deixa a Gira Girar," a classic from Os Tincoãs' repertoire. "The combination of atabaques," a tall hand drum, "with voices that remind me of Bach choirs made by the Tincoãs is very powerful and current," he said in a phone interview. "And 'Deixa a Gira Girar' is a song about the plurality of beliefs. It has a lot to do with the sense of communion that we seek on the dance floor."

With this wave of newfound appreciation, Os Tincoãs are "returning" with "Canto Coral Afrobrasileiro," a release made possible because Aleluia kept the master tape he received from Adelzon as soon as he returned from Angola, in 2002. Between 2010 and 2021, he released five solo albums including "Afrocanto das Nações," which was nominated for a 2021 Latin Grammy.

"Os Tincoãs' story was never linear," Aleluia said. "We always bounce back in time. This new record comes from one of those gaps in time. I don't even know if it represents an arrival somewhere, because in life we're always walking. We only stop when we surrender the spirit."

Second Stage Co-Founder To Make Exit

Carole Rothman will depart after 45 years with the theater.

By MICHAEL PAULSON

Carole Rothman, the president and artistic director of Second Stage Theater, will step down next spring after 45 years with the organization.

The move is a major development in the world of New York's large nonprofit theaters, several of which have leaders who have been in their jobs for three to five decades. Nationally, the field has experienced a much higher high level of turnover.

Second Stage, which Rothman cofounded in 1979, is a singular institution in New York's theatrical ecosystem. Established, as its name suggests, to stage revivals, it has long since added new plays to the mix, and focuses exclusively on work by living American writers. "No Brits. No Chekhov translations. No classics," Rothman said in 2017.

Second Stage is one of four nonprofits that operate theaters on Broadway: In 2015 the organization acquired the Helen Hayes Theater, Broadway's smallest house at about 600 seats. Second Stage began programming at the Hayes in 2018, and last year its production of "Take Me Out" won the Tony Award for best play revival.

Much of Second Stage's work has been presented Off Broadway, in a former bank building in Times Square, as well as in a smaller theater on the Upper West Side. The company had a $25 million budget in fiscal 2022, according to an I.R.S. filing; Rothman's total compensation was $369,000 that year.

Rothman's departure was announced on Wednesday not by Second Stage but by a public relations firm representing her. That firm would not give more detail about the move, and said she would have no immediate comment beyond a written statement in which she said, in part: "I'm forever grateful to all the people who have helped make Second Stage the creative springboard it is today. I'm so proud of what we have accomplished together."



SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Carole Rothman, center, accepting the Tony Award last year for Second Stage's revival of "Take Me Out."

Asked for comment, the chairmen of the theater's board, Terry Lindsay and Kevin Brockman, issued their own statement, saying: "Carole has been a driving force in American theater since founding Second Stage 45 years ago, and we're all indebted to her for her vision, her leadership, and her unwavering commitment to championing new artistic voices and diverse new works. We look forward to the world-class productions Carole has programmed for the upcoming 45th anniversary season and to celebrating her remarkable achievements over the coming year."

The board has already formed a committee to search for Rothman's successor, according to Tom D'Ambrosio, a Second Stage spokesman. The position is likely to be a desirable one, given the organization's strong track record and the opportunity to produce on Broadway.

A rare institution in the New York stage ecosystem.

Under Rothman's leadership, Second Stage has presented many important shows, including the Pulitzer Prize-winning plays "Between Riverside and Crazy" by Stephen Adly Guirgis and "Water by the Spoonful" by Quiara Alegría Hudes, and the Pulitzer-winning musical "Next to Normal" by Brian Yorkey and Tom Kitt. The theater also presented a pre-Broadway production of "Dear Evan Hansen," which went on to win the Tony Award for best musical and to have significant commercial success.

This fall, Second Stage plans a Broadway production of "Appropriate," a play by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins that will star Sarah Paulson, and next spring the company plans a Broadway production of "Mother Play," a new drama by Paula Vogel, starring Celia Keenan-Bolger, Jessica Lange and Jim Parsons.

Conceptual Art, Real Lawsuit

An artist who delivered blank canvases must repay a museum.

By MARC TRACY

A Danish artist who delivered two framed blank canvases titled "Take the Money and Run" must repay the Kunsten Museum of Modern Art about $70,000 it had given him to reproduce artworks involving physical currency, a Copenhagen court ruled on Monday.

The museum had commissioned Jens Haaning to recreate two earlier works, "An Average Austrian Year Income" (2007) and "An Average Danish Annual Income" (2010), which displayed cash in euros and Danish kroner. Haaning was given 532,549 kroner, according to the museum director, plus fees and expenses.

But Haaning surprised the museum by sending it "Take the Money and Run," which was included in an exhibition from September 2021 to January 2022. When the exhibition closed, Haaning did not return the money, prompting the museum, in the northern city of Aalborg, to file a lawsuit.

The Copenhagen court pointed to the contract and the disbursement receipt, which both stated that the kroner were to be repaid after the exhibition. Though Haaning has said he did not intend to return the money, the court added, the museum never agreed to those terms.

The court allowed him to keep almost $6,000 to compensate him for the showing of "Take the Money and Run."

Haaning said in an interview on Tuesday that he has not repaid the money because, he argued, keeping the money is itself the art.

"I will go so far to say that the piece is that I have taken the money," he said. "The two empty frames is actually a representation of the concept. So more important than the absence of money is that I've taken the money."

He acknowledged that he did not fulfill the original commission.

"I completed something else," he said. "You're asked to show a 10- and a 12-year-old work, and suddenly you have a better concept."

Lasse Andersson, director of the Kunsten Museum, said he would not comment while the case was proceeding, noting that there was a four-week period for appeals.

As part of the exhibition, the museum posted on its website that "Take the Money and Run" was in a tradition of art "that leaves materials as a trace left behind or a framework for an idea or an action," and compared it to works by Banksy and Bjorn Norgaard. The museum added, "Even the lack of money in the work has a monetary value when it is designated as art and thus shows how the value of money is an abstract quantity."



HENNING BAGGER/AFP — GETTY IMAGES

One canvas of "Take the Money and Run," by the Danish artist Jens Haaning.

Jonas Kaufmann, left, and Claus Guth with a bust of Wade Thompson, the namesake of the Armory's Drill Hall, where "Doppelganger" will be staged.



AMIR HAMJA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Solo Sung in Isolation Fills Vast Space

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

"Schwanengesang," originally sung in parlors, are much less expected, and seemingly ill-suited, for the vast drill hall. But "Doppelganger" will unfold there amid an installation (designed by Michael Levine) of more than 60 hospital beds occupied by wounded soldiers. Kaufmann will rise from one of them, to think back on his life at the moment of his death.

The path to "Doppelganger" was long, and not just because the production, originally planned for fall 2020, was delayed by pandemic closures. Years ago, Pierre Audi, the Armory's artistic director, approached Guth and Kaufmann about a music theater project for the drill hall, inspired by little more than their prestige and friendship, which goes back to their education at the Hochschule für Musik in Munich.

"I gave them carte blanche to propose something," said Audi, one of the few dreamers in New York who can still commission work on the monumental scale of the Armory. Kaufmann said that he and Guth discussed music by Strauss, Mahler and Wagner, as well as Janacek's frequently staged cycle "The Diary of One Who Disappeared."

But the idea of mounting, say, Mahler's "Kindertotenlieder" didn't appeal to Guth. "If you have this huge orchestra, it will be the same structure you have at a normal concert," he said. "So, how to get this very specific situation of not being in the opera house or concert hall? We thought it would be great to have in this huge hall just this lonely singer exposed."

They arrived at the idea of a song recital. And from there, Guth said, "It must be Schubert."

He researched the history of the Armory and was struck as much by its use as a hospital and shelter as by its housing of a militia regiment. "It's interesting to think of this place not as a drill hall, but the opposite," he said.

Guth also thought about the "Schwanengesang" song "Kriegers Ahnung," in which a soldier worries about dying in battle and longs for "how cheerful the fireside glow seemed when she lay in my arms." "My storytelling is, say, the last hour of this wounded soldier," Guth said. "And in this last hour you see his flashbacks and his dreams."

Levine — a collaborator with Guth on a Metropolitan Opera-bound production of Janacek's "Jenufa" — responded to that idea with a design incorporating a dreamily expansive field of hospital beds, in part as an attempt to rise to the drill hall's size.

"You want to address the space itself," he said on a recent afternoon at the Armory, gesturing to the set as it was being arranged. "It's a thrilling space to put anything in, and in a way it's your responsibility to do justice to it. I've seen some beautiful, beautiful things here, but it's not an easy space to get right."

He first submitted his designs in early 2020, just as he was reading about how Wuhan, China — a city of roughly 8.5 million people — was shutting down because of Covid-19. He couldn't imagine that; it would be like New York City doing the same. Once that happened too, he began to see pop-up hospitals similar to the one he had conceived for "Doppelganger."

Now it has taken on an eerie resonance. Set vaguely in the first half of the 20th century, the production, with its rows and rows of beds, seems like a darkly familiar sight, especially to New Yorkers. And, Levine said, the isolation of a temporary hospital — whether during a war, as in "Doppelganger," or somewhere like the Javits Center in the early days of the pandemic — is supported, even amplified, by Schubert's music.

"There's something lonely about these songs," Levine said, "and there's something quite lonely about this space."

Kaufmann will be lightly amplified, but the concept of "Doppelganger" still relies on a performer with his immense presence, Audi said. "You need a personality like this," he added, "because he's alone onstage, and this is all taking place inside his head."

He won't be entirely alone. Among the beds will be dancers, who play the parts of fellow soldiers, as well as actors playing hospital workers. And Schubert's score will be joined by Mathis Nitschke's original music — which links the songs, picking up the harmonic thread of one and transitioning to that of the next. (Deutsch also has a showcase in the form of an interlude pulled from a late Schubert piano sonata.)

All this is possible, Kaufmann said, because "Schwanengesang" isn't really a cycle. "We're allowed to do something different with it," he added, in a collaborative process among friends. "That's our privilege, that we can present our ideas in a new package."

That N.C. Wyeth Will Look Very Nice in My Bedroom

A $4 thrift-store find in Manchester, N.H., sells for $191,000 at auction.

By MATT STEVENS

You can walk out of the Savers in Manchester, N.H., with a shirt for as little as $4.99. There are $2 rings for those interested in costume jewelry. Framed artworks too big for shelves lean invitingly against one of the walls.

The thrift store's manager says that shopping there is like a personal treasure hunt, which was certainly the case for one woman who made the find of a lifetime in 2017.

While pushing a metal cart through the Savers on a hunt for home décor, she spotted a dusty painting with a substantial wooden frame amid a stack of posters and prints. Two women in the image appeared to be in a standoff, the elder displaying stern disapproval.

The shopper was taken by the painting — Who were the women? Why did they seem so tense? — and clunked it into her cart. Minutes later, she was wheeling out an authentic oil panel by N.C. Wyeth, one of the premier American illustrators of the 20th century, known for bringing to life classic stories like "Treasure Island," "Robin Hood" and "Robinson Crusoe."

Her bill for the long-lost work, which sold at auction on Tuesday for $191,000 including fees? Four dollars.

"We look at all the donations we receive and we place a value on them as best we can," said the Savers manager, Shaun Edson. "We are not connoisseurs of paintings. We do our best to evaluate the pieces and value them appropriately."

He added: "I wasn't with the company in 2017. Obviously we missed the boat."

The painting's owner recalled the sequence of events in a telephone interview with The New York Times and was granted anonymity because she is becoming much richer from the sale of a painting that has drawn considerable attention.

After purchasing the piece, the buyer hung it in her bedroom before eventually casting it aside into a closet with school pictures and other items. When she rediscovered the work in May and noticed a signed label on the back, she decided to post some images of it on Facebook.

Lauren Lewis, an art conservator, was among those who reached out after seeing the painting on social media. Eventually, the owner said, she and her husband wrapped the painting in a blanket, loaded it into the back of their S.U.V. and drove about 90 minutes to meet Lewis in the parking lot of a bus terminal.

Wielding a magnifying glass, Lewis became excited and spoke about aspects of the work the owner had never considered, such as its brushstrokes.

So the couple scrapped their plans to stop for lunch, instead driving straight home to rehang the painting. This time, the owner's husband placed pillows on the floor beneath it.

"How is this possible?" Lewis said she had been asking herself since she first saw the Wyeth on Facebook. "It's all very fortuitous. This has all come together in a lovely way."

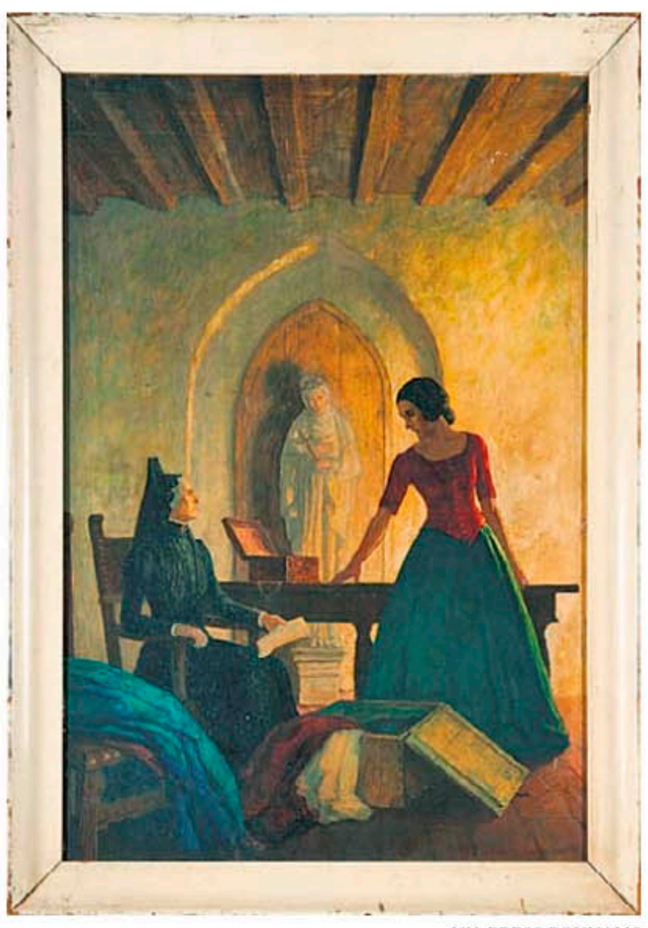
The frontispiece illustration that is now being auctioned was part of a four-image set that Wyeth contributed for a 1939 edition of Helen Hunt Jackson's novel "Ramona," which revolves around an orphan living in Southern California after the Mexican-American War. The illustration, also called "Ramona," portrays the tension between the young woman and her foster mother, according to catalog notes provided by the auction house Bonhams Skinner, which also say Wyeth was known for his "vivid colors and a skillful use of light and shadow."

Wyeth's work is featured at the Brandywine Museum in Chadds Ford, Pa., and he is part of one of the most prominent artistic families in the United States. The Museum of Modern Art owns the painting "Christina's World" by Andrew Wyeth, one of N.C. Wyeth's five children.

Experts say "Ramona" was probably a gift from book publishers to an editor or to the estate of the author. But how it wound up at the Savers in Manchester is unclear.

Good things like the thrift store find, the painting's owner said, do not often happen to people like her and her husband. They have begun to allow themselves to think about the bills they can pay, and a vacation to Germany to visit one of their children.

Aware that she will soon part ways with the painting, its owner bought a copy of the 1939 version of "Ramona" on Amazon. Although she is a bibliophile, she plans to rip out Wyeth's illustration of the two women and frame it.



VIA PRESS BONHAMS



VIA PRESS BONHAMS

Top, the find, an N.C. Wyeth illustration for the novel "Ramona." Above, the back of the illustration, which had a signed label. Above right, Shaun Edson, manager of Savers thrift store in Manchester, N.H., where the work was found back in 2017. He didn't work there then.



JOE KLEMENTOVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The owner once cast the oil panel into a closet with school pictures.

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THE MAGICIAN OF MILAN

Matthieu Blazy has changed Bottega Veneta.
BY VANESSA FRIEDMAN | PAGE 7



CARMINE ROMANO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Matthieu Blazy, the creative director of Bottega Veneta, in his office in Milan. The rug was custom-made to resemble stracciatella, his favorite ice cream.

ENCOUNTERS



TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Brooke Shields at the Café Carlyle last week for her sold-out debut show.

'Fame Is Weird,' and She Knows It

In a cheeky cabaret show, Brooke Shields recounts her roller-coaster ride of a career.

By JACOB BERNSTEIN

"Most of the time, I'm halfway content."

Those words are Bob Dylan's, and they were delivered one night last week by Brooke Shields during her sold-out debut show at the Café Carlyle, the intimate Manhattan supper club where Bobby Short, Elaine Stritch and Debbie Harry have performed.

It was five months after Ms. Shields had returned to the spotlight with "Pretty Baby: Brooke Shields," an acclaimed documentary that chronicled the ups and downs of a career that got its start in the 1970s, when she was a child model and actress marketed as a sex symbol.

A number of celebrities came out to see her at the venue, which is blocks away from the Upper East Side apartment where she grew up. At a table close to the stage were the actors Naomi Watts, Billy Crudup and Laura Dern. Nearby sat Mariska Hargitay, whom Ms. Shields has worked with on "Law & Order: SVU." The crowd also included two men who had done cabaret at the Carlyle: Isaac Mizrahi, who designed the loosefitting orange dress Ms. Shields was wearing, and Alan Cumming.

Whether by design or chance, Ms.

CONTINUED ON PAGE D4

A Branding Milestone in a Brown Paper Bag



PHOTOGRAPHS VIA BLOOMINGDALE'S

For the 50th anniversary of its Big Brown Bag, Bloomingdale's has created a special version stamped with a golden "50."

Bloomingdale's celebrates 50 years of a shopping totem with the Big Brown Bazaar.

By HILARY REID

It has made cameos in "Friends," "Gossip Girl" and "Elf." It has been reincarnated as a cake, a Limoges porcelain box and a champagne-diamond pendant. It has been rendered in chrome-plated resin as part of a sculpture of Andy Warhol by the artist Rob Pruitt. And, as other entities in the fashion world have been airbrushed and transformed over the past five decades, its brown-kraft-paper visage has had no significant face-lifts.

It is a shopping bag — the Big Brown Bag, from the department store Bloomingdale's — which turns 50 this month.

To celebrate, Bloomingdale's has introduced the Big Brown Bazaar at its flagship store on 59th Street in Manhattan, which is filled with new merchandise inspired by the shopping bag, including a Big Brown pickleball paddle ($98), a Big Brown journal ($19.95) and a Polo Ralph Lauren sweatshirt ($188) that features a bear holding a Big Brown Bag. A commemorative version of the bag, with a golden "50" and rope handles, will also be offered to store customers through October.

Introduced in 1973, the Big Brown Bag debuted amid a rebranding at Bloomingdale's that began a year earlier under Marvin Traub, then the department store's chief executive, as it celebrated a century in business.

Mr. Traub, who died in 2012, wrote in his memoir that as part of the initiative, the store's vice president for advertising and sales promotion at the time, Mary Joan Glynn, proposed a redesign of its logo and graphics. For that effort, the store tapped Massimo and Lella Vignelli, the married founders of the graphic design firm Vignelli Associates, who in 1972 had redesigned the New York City subway map. They developed a new typeface for Bloomingdale's: a modernist, sans-serif font that looked different from its earlier branding, which featured its name rendered in a swirly script that recalled a handwritten signature. Mr. Traub, in his book, wrote that Ms. Glynn named the font Bloomingtype.

Around the time the store started to use Bloomingtype, it introduced a larger size of the brown-kraft-paper shopping bags it had been giving to customers. The bigger bags were requested by the store's linens department, to better fit items like pillows and blankets. Printed on those bags were three stacked words: Big Brown Bag. Later, a Little Brown Bag was introduced for customers buying cosmetics, and after that, a Medium Brown Bag.

The bags' combination of matter-of-fact tag lines and mundane material poked at the idea of the shopping bag as a status symbol, said Emily Orr, an associate curator at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum. "The bag isn't memorable due to its fancy materials or its flashy exterior," she said, "but because "it's very readable and recognizable and makes design accessible."

About two decades later, the bags were reworked to incorporate the Bloomingdale's name down their sides. But by then they had already become symbolic of the department store and the lifestyle it had come to signify: a rarefied but not inaccessible mishmash of uptown and downtown sensibility epitomized by the events hosted at the flagship store in the 1970s and '80s, which drew guests like Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis; the designers Diane von Furstenberg and Calvin Klein; and Mr. Warhol, who was known to carry around issues of Interview, the magazine he founded, in brown shopping bags from Bloomingdale's.

"If you recognized the bag, you were in the Bloomingdale's tribe," said Debbie Millman, the chair of the master's program in branding at the School of Visual Arts and the host of the "Design Matters" podcast.

In the years since the Big Brown Bag debuted, Bloomingdale's has introduced other shopping bags made in collaboration with artists and designers as part of a series that the store started producing in the early 1960s. Those bags — which have featured motifs by the fashion designer Franco Moschino and the interior designer Ettore Sottsass, among others — were a way to communicate the store's cultural awareness to customers, said John C. Jay, a creative director of communications and marketing at Bloomingdale's from 1979 to 1992. Some are now in the permanent collections of the Cooper Hewitt and the New-York Historical Society.

"When a new bag hit the streets of Manhattan, immediately you would get calls," said Mr. Jay, who is now the president of global creative at Fast Retailing, a conglomerate that owns Helmut Lang and other brands. "People would say, 'Did you see that bag?'"

The Big Brown Bag and its ilk were never retired, though, and in 1995, the style was adapted into a brown PVC tote bag, which Bloomingdale's has since sold in various sizes. Other merchandise inspired by the shopping bag has included mugs, passport covers and key chains.

"People like to take a piece of the brand home with them," said Frank Berman, the executive vice president and chief marketing officer at Bloomingdale's. "We've done umbrellas — Big Brown umbrellas — we've done Big Brown beach chairs, we've done Big Brown towels, we've done Big Brown chocolate boxes."

There have also been special editions of the shopping bag. In 2018, Bloomingdale's created a Super Brown Bag, featuring characters from Super Mario Bros., to promote a collection the store released in collaboration with Nintendo. A year later, a version of the bag with an altered tag line — Big Little Lies — was introduced to promote a partnership with that television show and HBO.

"The No. 1 thing people associate with the brand is that Big Brown Bag," Mr. Berman said.

While leaving the Bloomingdale's flagship store on a Saturday afternoon last month, Liat Orshansky described the Big Brown Bag she was carrying as "classic." But there are other shopping bags that feel more luxurious, she said.

"Even though what's in here is Chanel shoes, it's not a Chanel bag," said Ms. Orshansky, 47 and from Los Angeles.

Max Cantor, 35, who walked out of the store with a Medium and a Little Brown Bag, said he had once heard that you should never shop somewhere if you would be embarrassed to carry that store's bag. "It might be kind of snobby, but I think there's some truth to that," said Mr. Cantor, a video director in Brooklyn who has worked with The New York Times.

Gesturing to his brown shopping bags, he added, "I think this is kind of a fail-safe."



"L'Esprit de France," 1961.



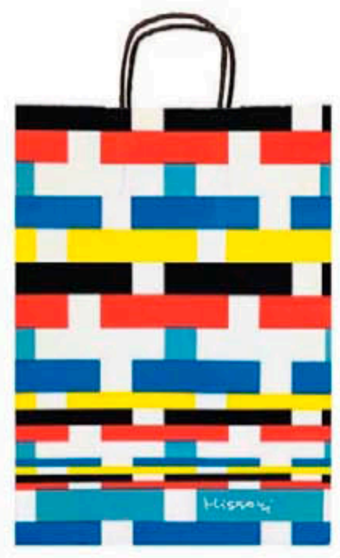
A 1988 Disney bag.



"The Men's Store," a 1978 bag.



A 1991 bag by Malcolm Garrett.



A 1980 Missoni bag.



A 2004 bag by Marc Jacobs.



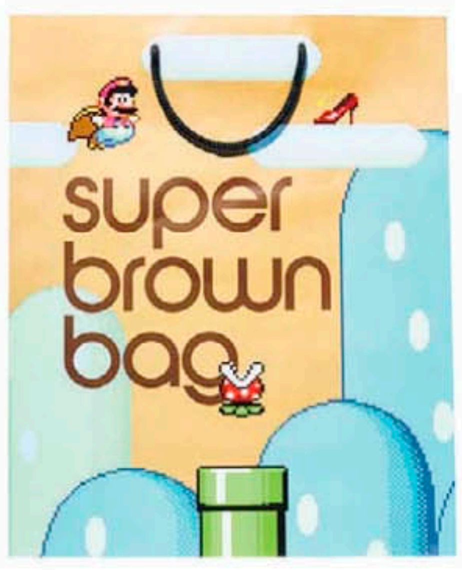
Sonia Rykiel, circa 1980s.



A Tony Bennett bag from 2008.



A 1984 Kazumasa Nagai bag.



A Nintendo bag from 2018.



People Places Things

HIGHLIGHTS FROM TMAGAZINE.COM



ENTERTAINING WITH

Flower Power

"There's a fountain with *perfume in it?*" asked the English actor Leo Woodall, his eyebrows raised in disbelief. One might think the star of HBO's second season of "White Lotus" would be unfazed by extravagant decoration, but this he'd never seen.

To celebrate the release of Dior's new L'Or de J'adore fragrance and the house's most recent collaboration with the French sculptor Jean-Michel Othoniel, the brand hosted a 100-person dinner early this month at the Palm House inside the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Spaced out across two long banquet tables were, indeed, 14 miniature Murano glass fountains — made for the occasion by Mr. Othoniel, the event's co-host — which bubbled quietly with a watered-down version of Dior's scent all night.

"Oh yeah, I got a whiff," said Mr. Woodall, after inhaling deeply while standing over one. It was about two feet tall and made of golden glass orbs stacked on top of one another — a nod to the perfume bottle's design. Now curious, the actress Meghann Fahy, one of Mr. Woodall's "White Lotus" co-stars, did the same, pronouncing the scent "gorgeous — and subtle, too." Developed by the perfumer Francis Kurkdjian, it has notes of orange blossom, jasmine and centifolia rose.

The cool, fragrant air inside the Victorian-style building offered much-needed respite from the sweaty, 80-degree weather outside, where six new pieces by Mr. Othoniel were on display as part of his latest exhibition, "The Flowers of Hypnosis," sponsored by Dior's Cultural Gardens Initiative. The brand began working with the artist, whose pieces often resemble looping configurations of giant jewelry beads, in 2012, and for the L'Or de J'adore release, the house commissioned 100 miniature versions of his "Golden Rose" sculpture to accompany a limited-edition version of the perfume's bottle.

"In the house of Dior, gardens have always been so important," said Véronique Courtois, the president and C.E.O. of Parfums Christian Dior, in a toast. "Mr. Dior cultivated them as places of memory and rebirth. Of course, flowers inspired so many of his couture creations and so many of his fragrances, which were considered the finishing touch of the dress."





PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID CHOW

From top: the exterior of the Palm House inside the Brooklyn Botanic Garden; pink and white roses on the table; settling into dinner.

Today, Mr. Othoniel believes gardens are just as significant to everyone's well-being, if not more so. "People need places like that to relax and leave the stress of the city," he said. With this dinner, his hope was to activate all the guests' senses — sight, sound, touch, smell and taste — at once, forming lasting memories. "Working for the souvenir is what I love," he added. "It's not like a museum, where you can come back. This is so spectacular. It's just something you remember as a crazy night."

And the Palm House naturally inspired talk of nuptials. One guest noted that she'd gotten married in the same place years earlier and had attended another wedding at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden this summer.

In addition to Mr. Woodall and Ms. Fahy, guests included the actresses Charlize Theron — who has been the face of Dior's J'adore perfume since 2004 — Alexandra Daddario, Rachel Brosnahan, Natalia Dyer, Anna Diop and Stephanie Hsu; the artist Mickalene Thomas, who has collaborated with the brand a number of times, most recently for the spring 2023 couture collection; the gallerist Emmanuel Perrotin, who represents Mr. Othoniel; and the photographers Brigitte Lacombe and Maripol.

This was Mr. Othoniel's first time hosting a dinner with the fashion house, something he'd long dreamed of doing. "It's really like a fairy-tale presentation," he said. "My sculptures are quite abstract and minimal, but the dinner was totally baroque, which is what I love." For the event, he and his team made 14 fountains (seven for each table); 50 vases, filled for the meal with pink and white roses; and 50 lamps that glowed with a golden hue from within — all produced in Murano, Italy. They were placed on a long centerpiece made of Murano glass, as well, which Mr. Othoniel described as a "gold brick road." He also designed the dinner plates featuring watercolor versions of his gold L'Or de J'adore sculpture design.

The meal began with a salad of beets, white strawberries, gem lettuce, buckwheat and goat cheese, plated in the form of a blossoming flower. Next came striped bass served atop a pillow of yellow jeweled rice — a nod to L'Or de J'adore's gold-hued bottle — as well as carrots and snap peas mixed in. For dessert: a dark chocolate tart topped with salted caramel and Cara Cara orange slices, followed by bite-size fruit-flavored gummies and chocolate and caramel bonbons for guests to enjoy on their way out the door.

The drinks included a Cloudy Bay sauvignon blanc and a Newton Vineyard unfiltered cabernet sauvignon, plus Ruinart Champagne with dessert. As for music, during cocktail hour in the garden, the Harlem Chamber Players performed Mozart's "Spring" quartet, as well as pieces by Franz Joseph Haydn, Joseph Bologne and Ludwig van Beethoven. For the complete article, tmagazine.com. *EMILIA PETRARCHA*



MATTHIEU SALVAING

La Tour d'Argent's renovation was led by Franklin Azzi.

THE T LIST

New-Look Argent

Seen from Paris's Pont de la Tournelle, the eight-story facade of the landmark restaurant La Tour d'Argent looks about the same as it did when its third-generation owner, André Terrail, grew up there in the 1980s, deploying toy parachutists into quayside traffic. But the interior is no longer indifferent to the 21st century: Late last month, La Tour d'Argent reopened its doors after a yearlong renovation led by the Paris architect Franklin Azzi.

"It's my Tour," says Mr. Terrail, who took over after his father's death in 2006. "The same, but more exacting, more thoughtful."

The new look draws on the outsize history of the classically French fine-dining institution, which has been serving diners since 1582, taking particular inspiration from the streamlined motifs of its Art Deco era. On the seventh floor, the redesigned restaurant — overseen since 2020 by the executive chef Yannick Franques — functions more than ever as a theater.

The airy dining room, in shades of indigo and silver, looks onto an open-plan kitchen and an elevated platform where the restaurant's signature pressed-duck dish is prepared nightly. Upstairs and downstairs are new bars suited to less formal occasions: Le Bar des Maillets d'Argent, an all-day lounge with a fireplace, and Le Toit de la Tour, a rooftop terrace.

Given that it has the welcoming air of a boutique hotel, it's no wonder that the building can now host overnight visitors in a private apartment on the fifth floor, complete with a touch of Scandinavian-style minimalism attributable, in part, to Mr. Terrail's Finnish mother. For more from the T List, tmagazine.com. *ZOEY POLL*

T THE NEW YORK TIMES STYLE MAGAZINE

Lena Dunham Will Paint a Mural for You

A quirky auction raises money to help crew members affected by the Writers Guild strike.

By JESSICA ROY

A typical Hollywood charity auction, like the Baby2Baby Gala, might consist of beauty sessions with sought-after dermatologists, autographed books and set memorabilia.

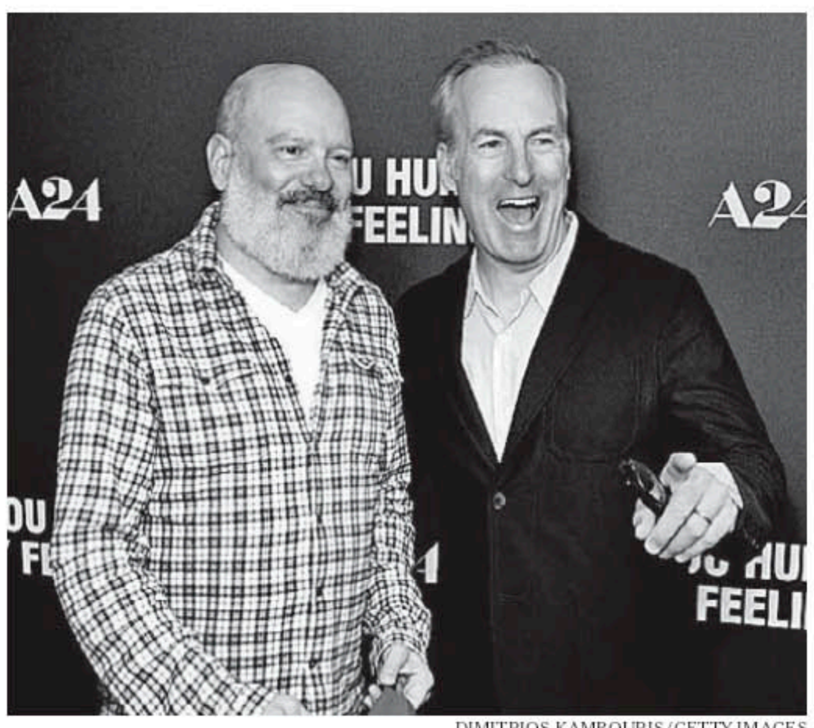
The charity auction organized by the Union Solidarity Coalition (or T.U.S.C.), a group of writers and directors who came together this year to help crew members affected by the Writers Guild strike, is offering experiences, many featuring hidden talents of celebrities that have little to nothing to do with their current career paths.

The strike, now in its fourth month, has left writers and crews without paychecks and health care coverage. All of the net proceeds from T.U.S.C.'s charity auction will go to the Motion Picture & Television Fund's crew health care fund. Qualifying crew members (those with less than $10,000 in assets) can enroll for a $350 grant, which — depending on their income — can help cover most if not all of their monthly insurance costs.

"Right now the W.G.A. is on strike, and SAG is on strike," said the actor and comedian Paul Scheer, referring to the Writers Guild of America and the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists. "At the end of the day, we're going to get a better contract that's going to give us different levels of money. But the crew members who are not negotiating with us because they're on a different cycle — they're just losing work and there's no benefit there." (Mr. Scheer donated a meet-and-greet for his popular podcast "How Did This Get Made?")



PHOTOGRAPHS BY LUIS FELBER



DIMITRIOS KAMBOURIS/GETTY IMAGES

Above, Lena Dunham is offering to paint a mural; right, dinner with David Cross, left, and Bob Odenkirk, can also be bid on.

'They're just losing work and there's no benefit there,' an actor says.

Many of the listings have bids of thousands of dollars. Lena Dunham is offering to paint a mural, which must be done in Los Angeles, New York or London; it is currently going for $5,100. "I really hope whoever wins my mural is prepared to give me a lot of coffee, tell me about their life in detail so I can translate that into colors and shapes — and that it can be its own new bonding experience," she said in an email.

John Lithgow, the award-winning actor who donated an original watercolor dog painting, said he had painted numerous pet portraits for other silent auctions.

The auction, which started on Sept. 13 and runs for 10 days, is one of the many ways in which the members of T.U.S.C. have tried to help their projects' crew members stave off financial hardship. In July, the group organized a fund-raiser in Los Angeles featuring a performance by the band Fishbone, which, coupled with another small celebrity auction on the website Give Butter, raised $315,000.

T.U.S.C. is a "scrappy, very democratic organization" with "no hierarchy and nobody in charge," said the writer and producer Liz Benjamin, whose credits include "Dead to Me," "Bridgerton" and "The Blacklist."

Ms. Benjamin, the actress and filmmaker Amy Seimetz, the writer Aviva Yael and the filmmaker Moira Fett have been helping to plan, organize and advertise T.U.S.C.'s auction, courting celebrity contributions and working with Matchfire, an auction management service, to get each item up and running.

Other items and experiences up for bidding include an in-person dinner with the "Mr. Show" creators David Cross and Bob Odenkirk, which is currently going for more than $10,000. "I cannot believe how unique and special each item is," Ms. Benjamin said.

Ms. Benjamin said T.U.S.C. was planning to add listings in the coming days, including an "online experience" with the actress Nicole Kidman and the director Lulu Wang, and the chance to play 30 minutes of online Mortal Kombat I with the Hollywood couple Kumail Nanjiani and Emily V. Gordon.

Having the auction be uncharacteristically open to the public is part of T.U.S.C.'s marketing strategy. "The fan base of a Brit Marling sweatshirt goes so far beyond people who work in Hollywood," the director Susanna Fogel said. "They're probably just big fans of the show who live anywhere, and now they can have access to information about what our work force is striking for."

All of the listings come with the warning: "Respect for talent and their staff will be expected at all times. Inappropriate behavior or solicitation for personal gain by the winner could result in the immediate conclusion of the experience with no refund. The talent has the right to end the experience at any time, for any reason, with no refund. A background check for the winner may be required."

Bidders willing to spend more than $2,000 must also undergo a prequalification process run by Matchfire.

The auction has spawned plenty of reactions (and memes); some featured Photoshopped listings people wished would be auctioned off.

Even T.U.S.C. members participating in the auction have their own dream listings. "I know that I suggested this: Would Nicole Kidman walk through an AMC theater with someone?" Mr. Scheer said, referring to Ms. Kidman's widely beloved (and oft-imitated) AMC movie monologue. "And maybe we'll get her to do it. But if you could walk through that theater and just take a couple pictures with her — that's a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

Bids during the first few days totaled more than $90,000. Ms. Benjamin said the final goal was $150,000, adding, "I think we're going to go well past that."

THIRD WHEEL | GINA CHERELUS

Taking a Look at the Singles Events Horizon

The unattached mingled this summer at many functions. Sometimes, cornier was better.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACKIE MOLLOY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

AT A SPEED-DATING EVENT last month, $25 bought attendees 20 dates with strangers, each roughly five minutes long.

When the first blind dates began, it wasn't long before some people — mostly men — tried to go out of order so they could talk to the person they were most attracted to.

"There's a seat right here," one of the event's organizers said, steering a wayward attendee back into the designated flow.

Speed dating is no easy feat, requiring the conversational stamina of a filibuster champion, the brevity of an auctioneer and a positive mood to fight the boredom of repetition. Drinks were encouraged.

"I'm a very personable person — I hate texting, I love phone calls," said N'dack Fleming, 28, who added that she was ready to leave behind her "hookup phase." "So I was like, OK, this experience is a very personable experience."

The event, called We Met IRL, was created by Maxine Williams as a balm for those who have found it difficult to navigate a sometimes unsavory dating scene in New York City, where endless swiping and lukewarm flings can convince even the most introverted that it's time to leave the apartment. This summer, We Met IRL was just one of several events that nudged singles out into the real world, uniting them through common interests or kitschy themes, sometimes the more contrived, the better.





Top, a singles event called We Met IRL, held in Manhattan last month. Above, Papi Chulaah, a host at a Raw Honey party last month. Above right, a Must Love Dogs singles mixer hosted last week by Blink Date.

Singles events have long asked people to place their hopes for romance in the hands of strangers, promising attendees — if nothing else — the chance to get out of their comfort zones. Many of these events held in New York this summer centered on activities, like ax throwing, or shared interests, like a love of reading.

At a singles party for queer people of color hosted by the queer collective Raw Honey at the Sultan Room in Brooklyn last month, more than 200 attendees showed up to kick off cuffing season. Each person was asked to pick a colored wrist band: Red signaled you were there only to make friends, yellow identified you as polyamorous, and green meant you were single and down to mingle.

Gabrielle Hitchens, the founder of the collective, said that she knew it could be hard for queer people of color "to find each other and connect," so she wanted to provide a destination for them to do so in a party setting. Between dancing and drinking, many in the room seemed to hit it off, with at least one pair confirming they had a date planned in the days ahead.

Cambria Evans moved to New York City in 2021, and she said she hadn't yet been able to fully explore the queer community as a bisexual woman in Brooklyn. When she saw a flier for the Raw Honey event on Instagram, she thought it would be a great way to get out of her comfort zone.

"I did see a bunch of people that I was definitely attracted to, but I was definitely too shy to talk to them," Ms. Evans recalled a few days after the party, which she attended alone. "I am doing things one thing at a time."

A brightly lit room in Williamsburg filled with dog treats, toys and kibble might not be the most obvious setting for flirting and romance. However, dozens of people gathered last week at Boris & Horton, a dog-friendly cafe in Brooklyn, to do just that.

'I mostly came to this mix-and-match event for the dogs.'

It was a Must Love Dogs singles mixer hosted by Blink Date, a dating app founded by Taly Matiteyahu that schedules 10-minute phone dates for its members with potential matches. A lot of mingling happened among the dozens of guests, but at first, it was mostly the dogs introducing themselves.

Vladimir Manosalvas, who referred to himself as "single like a Pringle," said he came to the event alone with the intention of meeting dogs and only dogs: "Dogs are love, dogs are life and even though I like people, I mostly came to this mix-and-match event for the dogs."

Allie Shoemaker, who was at the cafe with her two dogs, Itty Bitty and Doodle, came to the event to look for a potential match but didn't have high expectations. She quoted a Carrie Underwood song that summed up her dating experience: "The more boys I meet, the more I love my dogs."

"The peace I feel right now, that I always wanted to feel with a partner, I feel with them, and that's OK," she said.

It's safe to say that many of us still yearn for a classic meet-cute that online dating cannot achieve. Singles mixers dangle the idea that you might find the one (or at least the person you want to cuff through the fall and winter) over drink specials and a niche theme. The only thing you need is an event link to place you and your future partner in the right place at the right time.

ENCOUNTERS

'Fame Is Weird,' and Brooke Shields Would Know

CONTINUED FROM PAGE D1

Shields, 58, has reflected the mood of the times across her nearly five-decade career. In the louche, druggie '70s, she starred (at age 11) in "Pretty Baby," the Louis Malle film about a romantic relationship between an adult man and a child prostitute. In the striving, just-say-no '80s, she graduated from Princeton and wrote a self-help book for teenagers in which she discussed her decision to remain a virgin.

In the next decade, she starred on Broadway (in a revival of "Grease"), displayed a talent for pratfalls in a hit sitcom ("Suddenly Susan"), and married and divorced a tennis star (Andre Agassi). In 2001, she married the comedy writer and filmmaker Chris Henchy, with whom she has had two children, and returned to the Broadway stage in "Chicago." She has also found time to write memoirs and host a podcast, "Now What."

And Ms. Shields pointed out during the show that somewhere along the course of her varied career: "I performed at Sea World. With Lucille Ball."

Her Café Carlyle residency is scheduled to run through Saturday. Every night is sold out. On Tuesday, she opened with "I Think We're Alone Now," making it into an ironic lament about how she has rarely felt alone since her mother decided she would be a star.

"I practically came out of the womb famous," she said, during a spoken-word interlude. "They tell me the doctor asked for a selfie."

She also went through periods when her career seemed to be over. "The other day," she said from the stage, "I was in the airport, and the flight attendant came up to me and said, 'Oh my God, you're Caitlyn Jenner!'"

In "Fame Is Weird," a song written for the show by Matthew Sklar and Amanda Green, she moved from her encounters with the public to her experiences with fellow celebrities. In the intro, she said she had turned down Donald J. Trump when he asked her out on a date but soon conceded that she had consented to Elizabeth Taylor's request that she pre-chew her gum.



TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

"I chewed it first," Ms. Shields said, "so I got the better end of the deal."

She also recounted being mean girl-ed by some of he world's best-known women. When she met Bette Davis at the Oscars, she said, "Hi, I'm Brooke Shields," to which the star replied, "Yes, you are." A similar encounter occurred when Ben Stiller brought her to Madonna's house, Ms. Shields said. The greeting she received from Madonna was curt: "Oh, you."

In many ways, the show seemed like an effort by Ms. Shields to work through her ambivalence about having fallen closer to earth after the years of childhood and teenage stardom. In the second half, she roasted and paid tribute to her mother, Teri Shields, who in the '70s and '80s became a focal point for the culture's misgivings about stage parenting and the sexualization of children in Hollywood.

"She has been in the press almost more than I have," Ms. Shields said, "and, probably, you all have your opinions of her."

She went on to note that life with her mother, who died in 2012, wasn't all bad.

"There was a lot of laughter and so much fun," she said. "She would do really crazy things. She would see a dog tied outside of a store, waiting for their owner to come back, and she would get right down in front of the dog to say, 'They're never coming back.' It was just so sick. It's dark. But really funny."

"I practically came out of the womb famous," Brooke Shields quipped between songs.

Dating Michael Jackson and George Michael, but rejecting Donald Trump.

She also acknowledged her mother's alcoholism. "We named a cocktail at the bar for her; actually, we named several for her," Ms. Shields said, before getting serious about how much she missed her. She added that one reason she wanted to play the Carlyle was that it was a place her mother had taken her when she was young. "She would be really proud," she said.

With that, she launched into Mr. Dylan's melancholy "Most of the Time."

Ms. Shields, who appeared to have a cold, sounded a bit like Bob Dylan as her throat began to give out. She then moved into material about the trials and tribulations of being a wife to Mr. Henchy, who was seated in the audience, and the mother of two teenage daughters, Rowan and Grier. While delivering Tina Dico's "Count to Ten," she apologized to a man seated close to the stage, who was catching much of her spit.

Toward the end, she sang "Faith," a 1987 hit by someone she knew, George Michael. She delivered the lyrics with conviction while also using the song to make a cheeky reference to the nights when she stepped out before the paparazzi in the role of the public girlfriend to Mr. Michael and Michael Jackson.

After the applause, the fashion designer Christian Siriano offered a quick review: "She was great, even though she clearly has Covid."

Moments later, Ms. Shields emerged from her dressing room and went through some quick hellos with friends and well-wishers. A waiter asked her what she would like to drink. "Tequila," she said, before moving to a corner table for a chat with a reporter.

Told of Mr. Siriano's thoughts, she said, "I don't have Covid!" But she said she did have a respiratory ailment that had landed her in the hospital a few days before the show.

Her vocal coach brought her cough drops. Publicists hovered. Ms. Shields explained that her cabaret show began taking shape in the spring. Working with the writer and director Nate Patten, as well as with the musical director Charlie Alterman, she said she wanted to put together an evening that would involve telling her own story truthfully while making it a source of comedy.

She was aware that this was a difficult moment to humanize the people who decided it was appropriate for her to appear in a movie at age 11 as someone whose virginity was auctioned off. Yet her mother was still her mother, and she loved her.

"Ambivalence is where real life happens," she said. "I mean, the point of it all is that we're not one thing or the other. We're human beings, and we're fraught."

Ms. Shields was asked about her experience with Mr. Trump.

"I was making some movie in the late '90s," she said. "My phone rang and it was him. He said: 'You and I should date. You're America's sweetheart, and I'm the world's richest man. People will love it.' At which point I stifled laughter and said, 'Thank you, I'm very flattered, but I have a boyfriend and I don't think he would appreciate me stepping out on him.' And he said, 'Well, I think you're making a big mistake.' I said, 'Well, I'm going to have to take my chances.'"

Did she not know that George Michael was gay? And did they really go on a date?

"A few," she said. "He was very respectful of my virginity."

"Read the book!" a publicist yelled, referring to "There Was a Little Girl," the 2014 memoir in which she tells the tale.

Ms. Shields added that, despite the appearance that her relationships with Mr. Michael and Mr. Jackson seemed merely for show, she had real bonds with both of them.

"We had so much fun," she said. "I wasn't just a purpose, as a beard. It actually was more than that. The conversations, the fears, the discussions."

The talk turned to her podcast — in which she has spoken with Stacey Abrams, Rosie O'Donnell, Chelsea Handler and Kris Jenner — and the one person she has been itching to get: Britney Spears, who hasn't given an interview in years.

"I tried very hard to find a way to be the first actual interview," Ms. Shields said. "And I haven't gotten it. But I am the only person who could do justice to the reality of the story. Whatever it is."

Why a Buzzy Fashion Show Suddenly Got Canceled

London was eager for new looks from Dilara Findikoglu. But that just wasn't enough.

By ELIZABETH PATON

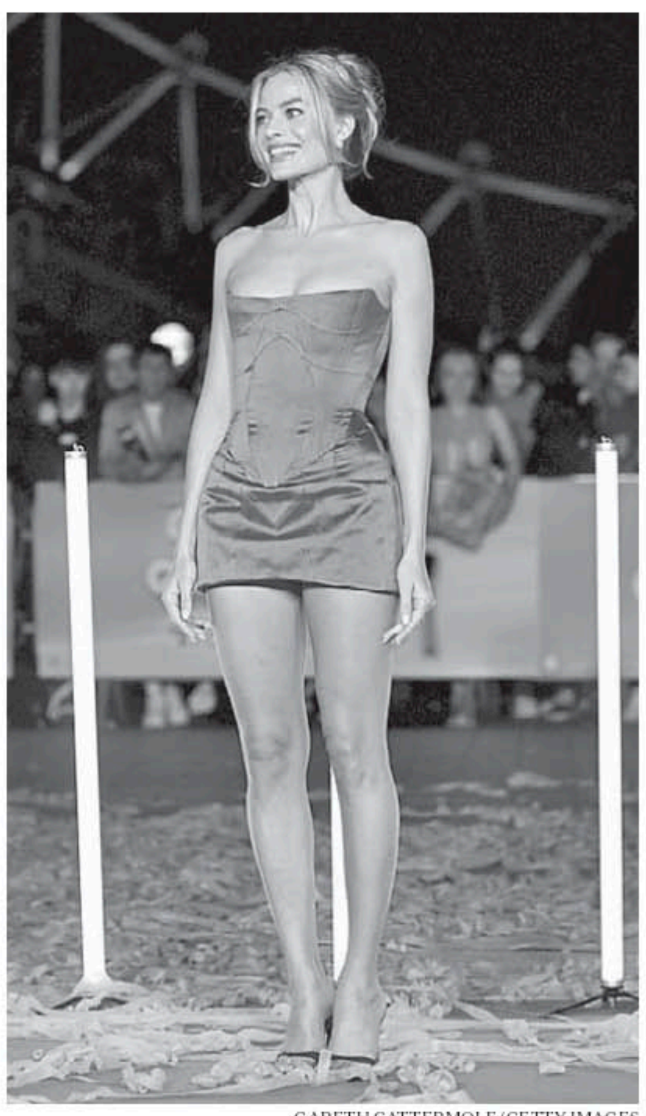


TORI FERENC FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Dilara Findikoglu, left, has designed dresses worn by, below from left, Hari Nef at a "Barbie" premiere, Margot Robbie at a "Barbie" premiere after-party and Cardi B at an awards show.



LIA TOBY/GETTY IMAGES FOR WARNER BROS.



GARETH CATTERMOLE/GETTY IMAGES



ANDREW KELLY/REUTERS

Dilara Findikoglu had the kind of summer most emerging designers could only dream of.

She dressed Margot Robbie in a racy strapless dress for the "Barbie" premiere after-party in London, one of the most high-profile red carpets of the year. Kylie Jenner pouted on Instagram in a red silk bra and champagne-colored corset and matching miniskirt, and Zendaya posed for Elle in a mohair bikini. At the MTV Video Music Awards, Cardi B wore a custom gown and matching cuffs made from thousands of silver hair clips.

Then there was the finale look from Ms. Findikoglu's show last season, the Joan's Knives dress, inspired by a vision of Joan of Arc returning from the dead for revenge. It was fierce feminized armor forged from Victorian silver cutlery and painstakingly set onto a curve-hugging black sheath. Hari Nef wore it for its red carpet debut (to the London "Barbie" premiere). Weeks later, Emma Corrin wore it on the cover of ES magazine, an accompanying fork sticking out of their hair.

Ms. Findikoglu's loyal fan base on social media went berserk each time she chalked up a win. Seven years after starting her namesake label, and with a recent nomination for New Establishment women's wear designer at the Fashion Awards, she seemed tantalizingly close to tipping from fashion groupie worship into a wider consciousness.

All this was headed toward a culmination during London Fashion Week, where her show was the most anticipated on the schedule. But then, just days before the shows started on Friday, and after months of preparation, everything changed. There would be no runway show after all.

Over a Zoom call, Ms. Findikoglu said she was sitting out the season, though not because of the anarchic streak for which she is known. She had to cancel the show, she said, if she wanted to keep her business afloat.

"This wasn't something I wanted to do or a decision I took lightly, but the reality is we simply don't have the finances for a runway show right now," she said. Her label, which she has wholly owned from the beginning, needed investors.

As fashion week neared — and despite the surrounding hype — the task of balancing the books became more ominous. Eventually, she said, she realized that she should "cancel the show and use that budget in smarter ways, rather than be some delusional artist."

"To put on a show, I have to have a brand," Ms. Findikoglu said. "The Dilara world and all its drama doesn't come for free. Everyone needs to be paid. With my shows, I take my brain out of my head and put it on the runway for everyone to see. If I have to do that in a halfhearted way, then all the other sacrifices stop being worth it."

A Woman Designing for Women

Ms. Findikoglu, 33, is far from alone in the struggle to thrive in the 21st-century fashion landscape. There are mounting, often insurmountable, challenges for independent designers everywhere, especially as conglomerates like LVMH and Kering expand their portfolios and become ever more dominant in the industry.

In London, a magnet for emerging fashion talent for three decades, things are especially tough because of the continuing fallout of Brexit and the pandemic.

"I don't think it has ever been more difficult to be an independent designer in London than it is at this moment," Caroline Rush, chief executive of the British Fashion Council, said at a news conference last week.

Once-glittering names like Christopher Kane and Nicholas Kirkwood filed for bankruptcy this year. Several of London's most promising new talents, like Nensi Dojaka and S.S. Daley, had already opted out of shows, long before Ms. Findikoglu canceled hers. That the starriest name felt her show could no longer go on says a lot about how precarious the industry is.

Still, Ms. Findikoglu has always been willing to go against the grain. Brought up in a traditional household in Istanbul, she traveled alone to London at 19 to study fashion design at Central Saint Martins. When she wasn't selected by her tutors for the prestigious graduate collection shown to reporters and editors, she led a crew that staged a guerrilla show outside the show site.

Her first solo show was in a strip club. The second was in a deconsecrated church, as was her most recent show, in February. Called "Not a Man's Territory" and inspired, in part, by protests in Iran against a compulsory hijab, that show was the most potent encapsulation yet of the core themes that have driven Ms. Findikoglu's work: anger, sex, feminism, emancipation, sorcery and history. The collection, grounded in her signature corsets and underwear, was, she said backstage, her "little dance of revolution toward women possessing their bodies back."

Lynette Nylander, the executive editorial director of Dazed Media, described Ms. Findikoglu as a designer who thrives on challenging and provoking her audience, as did Vivienne Westwood and Alexander McQueen.

"Dilara offers up these fierce visions of female beauty and isn't scared to go to dark places or make you feel uncomfortable to watch her doing so," Ms. Nylander said. At the same time, the garments themselves make a wearer feel quite the opposite.

"She presents herself as this intense industry rebel," Ms. Nylander said. "But Dilara really knows how to make her customers feel empowered in this sexy, often playful way. She is a woman designing for women."

Ms. Nef said she had wanted to wear the Joan's Knives dress to the "Barbie" premiere because of the way it accentuated her waist and because it wasn't pink, thus defying expectations.

'The Dilara world and all its drama doesn't come for free.'

"It is also covered in knives," she wrote in an email. "which felt like an appropriate way to meet a moment of unprecedented visibility."

Despite the rapturous industry response to her most recent collections, Ms. Findikoglu had been pondering new paths — at least creatively — well before she canceled her fashion week show. Tiny and dripping with gothic silver jewels, she sat at a picnic table last month outside her studio in the London neighborhood of Hackney, bathed in sunshine. She wore a satin bomber and a vintage Victorian lace skirt, her long tinted hair cascading down her back. She laughed a lot more than one would expect from the emotional heft of her work.

"I feel the weight of the world on my shoulders every time I start a collection, let alone finish one," she said. "I know I overwork myself massively."

"I have always had so much to say about what bothers me about the world," she continued. "But given the toll it takes on me emotionally, even physically, perhaps it's time to say less. I do still care, I just don't want to anymore. I am tired of fighting and feeling heavy and battling to exist."

Ms. Findikoglu's previous collections have been rooted in deep, messy conflict: good versus evil, past versus present, Istanbul versus London, political or sexual freedom versus oppression. The new collection was going to imagine 1980s club kids teleported to 18th-century Paris by the powerful vibrations of a magical first kiss. Lately, she said, she had been disappointed with the quality of parties in London. This was to be her way of hosting her dream soiree.

"I've always been about beauty and glamour, and my life does have a lot of that, but now I want more joy," she said. "Joy isn't something I've really explored in my work before."

No Fairy Tale

The commercial realities of fashion had driven much of her mental shift. She didn't have as much of herself to give creatively once she was focused on running a business. The buzz around celebrity endorsements, awards and reviews doesn't always yield financial returns; most of those pieces are custom-made one-offs that cost thousands of dollars.

But a swimwear line that Ms. Findikoglu produced during the first two pandemic years did extremely well, she said. So has her jewelry. Lately, she has been thinking about how to get her clothes onto more people and into their everyday lives. Dilara denim, she said with a grin, was about to become a big thing.

Not that she didn't love to see her creations on the red carpet and in magazines. As a self-described "Barbie girl," dressing actresses for the movie premiere had been a dream come true. She had also realized that it wasn't enough.

"I am very, very inspired by the street and subcultures," she said. "And if I'm not going to see my clothes on the street, it makes me think, 'Why am I doing this?' I want normal. I need normal, too. Power comes by making the Dilara world part of real life."

Unlike many designers who opt for a minimalist uniform, Ms. Findikoglu is a living billboard for her sensual and theatrical universe. She wouldn't think twice about wearing a corset to pick up a pint of milk from the store. Having the freedom to make that choice feels sacred to her, especially after being raised in Turkey, where what women wear can become contentious, even dangerous.

"It's important for me to express myself," she said. In recent years she has taken a step back from posting images of herself on social media. She had been told it might encourage people to take her more seriously. Now that was another choice that she was rethinking.

"My ex-boyfriend used to tell me I was too dramatic all the time," she said. "Now I just think: 'Why would you be surprised by that? Have you seen my designs? This is who I am. Take it or leave it.' More and more that's how I feel about my public image too."

On the day news started to spread that the Dilara Findikoglu show had been canceled, another big British fashion story broke: Sarah Burton was leaving the house of Alexander McQueen at the end of the month. Soon chatter swirled online that Ms. Findikoglu was in contention for one of the biggest jobs in the industry.

Ms. Findikoglu was deft at shielding her hand. Her primary focus, she said, was her company. What would happen to it? Maybe she would show during Frieze, the contemporary art fair that has a London leg next month. Or maybe something off-calendar next year.

In the meantime, it was business as usual.

"I love what I do, and I wouldn't want to do anything else," she said. "But I want people to know that it's a backbreaking, soul-crushing struggle to be an independent designer in 2023. This is no fairy tale. Anyone who says otherwise is lying."

In London, Fresh Ideas Rise Above the Fray

By ELIZABETH PATON

LONDON — Working in fashion is no fairy tale — just ask the independent designers in London. They may give the city its reputation as a hub of fearless creativity, but in times of economic upheaval, it is tougher for smaller labels to stay afloat. Once-buzzy names like Christopher Kane and Halpern went out of business this year. And this fall, the fashion week schedule seemed much lighter than in seasons past.

Several rising stars chose not to show their collections, including Nensi Dojaka, S.S. Daley and, after a last-minute cancellation, Dilara Findikoglu. But there was still much to be excited about, with some of the most talked-about shows from newer members of the fashion vanguard on the schedule: the dreamy draping on gowns at Di Petsa and Standing Ground, and the collision of skater grunge and Cornish milkmaids at Chopova Lowena (the label behind the cult carabiner-pleated kilts that seem to be everywhere). And then there was Priya Ahluwalia, who presented sublime prints inspired by unsung heroes of color, past and present, which were based on reporting in The New York Times's "Overlooked" series.

Members of the London fashion establishment were also on hand to deliver big moments. Jonathan Anderson came out to play with hoodies and shorts molded from clay, all hunched shoulders and rippled pockets that exaggerated the swagger of youth on the street. Roksanda, London's queen of color, sent out airy gowns in lilac and lime inspired by monastery frescoes from her native Serbia.

Molly Goddard deconstructed undergarments to reveal the internal structures that hold them — and us — together, to charming effect. And Erdem's collection, inspired by Deborah Cavendish, the Duchess of Devonshire, also touched on the idea of the undone. Specifically, the lived-in elegance of the English aristocracy was reflected in oversize coats made from spliced waxed Barbour jackets and Chatsworth house textiles.

London may be down, but it is definitely not out. Here is what we saw — and heard — that turned our heads.



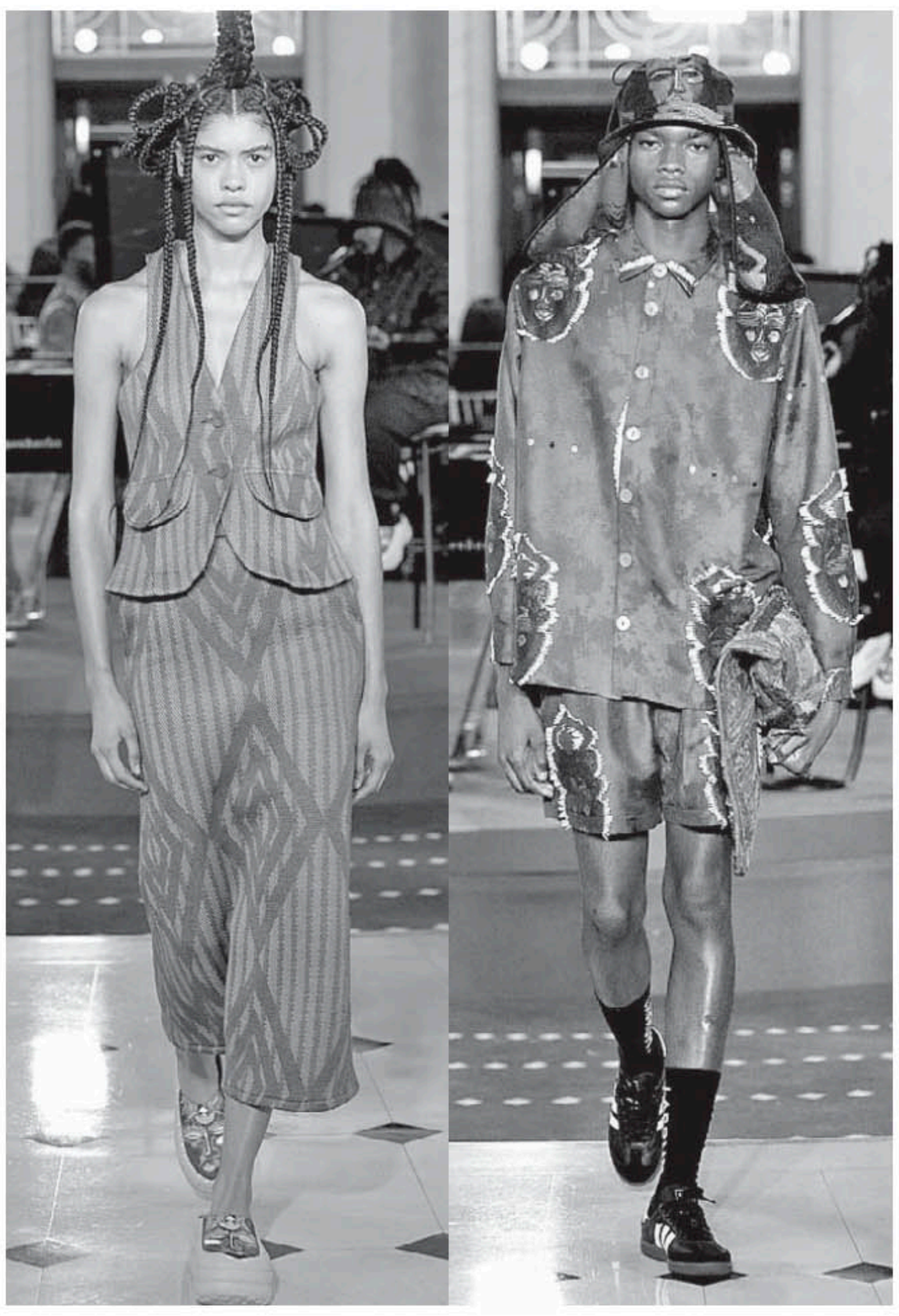
The Most Delicious Accessories

Ms. Rocha's show at the English National Ballet studios was strewn with roses, including real stems sewn into the sheer paneling of her dresses and flowers painted onto models' faces and limbs. Satin hair bows and ribbon trails danced along the floor. On the models' feet? Platform Crocs encrusted with chunky crystals and pearls that were inspired by the artist Cy Twombly's plaster cakes. And the accompanying handbags the models carried looked good enough to eat.



The Most Affecting Tribute

Richard Quinn's show was dedicated to his father, who died in June. Mr. Quinn is known for his showstopping gowns, and the workmanship this season, including the thousands of crystal droplets that hung like tears, and delicate mesh dresses with embroidered, boned skirts that looked like bird cages, was couture-level. When a weeping Mr. Quinn stepped out for the finale, his mother took him in her arms. The audience then joined her in giving the designer a standing ovation.



The Most Considered Prints

Foday Dumbuya, the founder of Labrum, is one to watch. Mr. Dumbuya, who won the Queen Elizabeth II Award for British Design this year, uses his label to tell stories about African art, fashion and history. This season, his eyes were on the Nomoli figurines of Sierra Leone and Liberia. They were printed on textured shorts suits and rain macs, as well as Samba sneakers and white rubber clogs, as part of a partnership with Adidas. He has just been nominated for the New Establishment men's wear award, a new category at this year's Fashion Awards.



The Most Welcome Trend

One figure stalked the London runways this season, and that was the scarlet woman. At 16Arlington, she wore feathery, skintight latex; at Chet Lo, in keeping with the designer's signature knitting technique, she was cherry red and spiky to the touch. At JW Anderson, she was playful in crochet, and at Supriya Lele and Simone Rocha, she was elegant and ready for after-dark play. The designs were an antidote to all the quiet luxury chat of late. A good red dress will always turn heads. Bye-bye beige.



The Worst-Kept Secret

On Monday, after weeks of speculation, Chioma Nnadi was confirmed as the successor to Edward Enninful at British Vogue, where Mr. Enninful was editor in chief. Ms. Nnadi, 44, will become the first Black woman to lead the fashion title when she takes up the recast role of head of editorial content next month. Currently, she is editor of the American Vogue website and a longtime favorite of Anna Wintour. Her new gig will be a homecoming of sorts, as Ms. Nnadi is London-born.



The Trippiest Set

Matty Bovan knows how to turn heads. He delivered the set of the week when he had his front row guests come backstage for dinner while his models got runway ready. Amid a frenzy of hair and makeup touch-ups, guests ate lobster pot pie and drank Tanqueray cocktails in the crypt of St. Martin-in-the-Fields church, an arm's reach from models, like Ashley Graham, who were wearing Mr. Bovan's collaged amalgamations of fabric and form.



The Silliest Drama

For his sophomore show for Burberry, Daniel Lee opted to paint the town blue. Specifically, the British fashion house took over the Bond Street tube station, where platform signs were replaced during fashion week to say "Burberry Street" — a move that baffled scores of tourists and foreigners, who missed their stops.



The Buzziest Exhibitions

Not one, but three new museum exhibitions devoted to fashion opened in London last weekend.

"Gabrielle Chanel: Fashion Manifesto," at the Victoria and Albert Museum, tracks how the woman called Coco became the architect of the modern woman's wardrobe.

At Somerset House, "The Missing Thread: Untold Stories of Black British Fashion" tells the story of Black creativity from the 1970s to the present day that was misrepresented or excluded from the mainstream industry narrative, with a particular focus on the archive of Joe Casely-Hayford, who died in 2019.

And at the Design Museum, an ambitious new retrospective centers on pieces from the first collections of some of the city's best-known designers who were supported by the British Fashion Council's Newgen talent program. Or, in the case of Alexander McQueen, replicas: After his 1993 show, the designer left garments, including a pair of his famous "bumster" pants, in garbage bags near a dumpster outside a nightclub because he didn't want to pay the cloakroom charge. He remembered only the next morning. The clothes were never seen again.

Sarah Mower, curator of the retrospective, which is called "Rebel: 30 Years of London Fashion," said that she wanted it to be as much about the culture surrounding the clothes as the pieces in the show. Hence the exhibition is staged with areas dedicated to student design ateliers and grubby nightclub queues, as well as the backstage of a runway show. It is deeply nostalgic but also full of excitement for what might come next in the London fashion scene.

DANIEL SIMS (ACCESSORIES); JEFF SPICER/BFC, VIA GETTY IMAGES (TRIBUTE); LABRUM LONDON (PRINTS); CHARLES McQUILLAN/BFC, VIA GETTY IMAGES, BEN BROOMFIELD, JASON LLOYD-EVANS AND GIOVANNI GIANNONI/WWD, VIA GETTY IMAGES (TREND, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT); DANIEL ZUCHNIK/GETTY IMAGES (SECRET); KEMKA AJOKU (TRIPPIEST); ANDY STAGG/THE DESIGN MUSEUM (BUZZIEST); BELINDA JIAO/GETTY IMAGES (SILLIEST)

FASHION REVIEW | VANESSA FRIEDMAN

And Suddenly It's Time to Focus on Life in the Trenches

Under Daniel Lee's command, Burberry turns to blue to help reboot the British brand.

LONDON — A few days before Daniel Lee's sophomore outing for Burberry, something unexpected happened in the Bond Street subway station. The signs turned blue — Burberry blue, the new very-bright blue that Mr. Lee has decided to make synonymous with his brand — and, instead of reading "Bond Street," read "Burberry Street."

The takeover, in honor of the opening of Burberry's redesigned Bond Street store, probably seemed like a brilliant idea on paper. So fun! So alliterative! So symbolic! (Bond Street = London landmark; Burberry = London landmark). The problem was the hordes of travelers who, not yet aware of Burberry blue, became confused and couldn't figure out where they were.

Sitting in the Burberry show, held in Highbury Fields, North London, an entirely different part of the city, I kind of knew how they felt.

Mr. Lee had been tasked with nothing less than a major reboot of the great British brand, with emphasis on the British part. He started with that blue; a new logo that brought back the Prorsum knight, the mounted gallant whose banner, in English, reads "Forward." And, in his first collection, he played around with the brand's signature plaid, inflating the pattern to enormous proportions and giving it a grunge-y spin. In his pre-collection this summer, he added a dose of sophistication, torquing it into waves at hemlines in an intriguing way.

Then he changed direction.

This time around, the trench was the star of the show: slick and buttoned-up, big at the shoulder, bound at the hips. Also a print featuring the brand's hardware — chains and locks and carabiners — snaked itself over silk shirts and scarf dresses, the backs of leather coats, and trousers. (The hardware, in its physical incarnation, was also all over the bags and shoes.) Some dresses had zippers along the seams that could be undone at will to open a sleeve, or raise an eyebrow at exposure to come.

There were some pretty one-shoulder disco-at-the-garden-party dresses with frilly tiers, some great military jackets made from ruched chiffon. But the mood, and palette, was more poker-faced, despite a troika of explosive florals and a blue strawberry print that looked as if someone had dosed the catering stands at Wimbledon.

The TikTok-fodder accessories from last season, like a knitted duck beanie (at least one of which was modeled by a guest this time around) and the rabbit's foot-on-steroids were nowhere to be seen. It was as if, after catering to the Gen Z set, Mr. Lee had said, "All right then," parked those ideas rather than building on them, and moved his attention to the grown-ups. Whom, it seems, he views as an altogether more cynical bunch, both when it comes to the tropes of "Britishness" and the Burberry archive.

Mr. Lee closed his show with a shirtless male model wearing only a pair of low-slung pants in that Bond Street — sorry, Burberry — blue and a belt with a big Prorsum knight buckle. It was a striking choice. Clothes? Pshaw! Strip 'em away, and it's the branding that matters.

Maybe he's right. Maybe that's where we are now, in our relations with the nation states in which we live and the labels that dress them. But there's a depth of emotion that is missing.



HOLLIE ADAMS/REUTERS

Models in formation on the Burberry catwalk in North London, where the trench coat was the star of Daniel Lee's latest show.

The Man Who Transformed Bottega Veneta

Matthieu Blazy believes in fashion that serves a function and products that are unique.

By VANESSA FRIEDMAN

For years, Matthieu Blazy was a fashion ghost: a specter whispered about but rarely seen. "The most famous designer you've never heard of," New York magazine crowed in 2014.

At only 30, he was said to be the man behind the renaissance of Margiela couture, after the brand's founding designer left the house. A few years later, he was rumored to be the secret sauce in Phoebe Philo's Céline collections. Then he was spotted at Calvin Klein, helping reinvent it under Raf Simons. His name kept coming up in reference to top designer jobs, but he never took a bow at the end of the runway. He was rarely photographed. He didn't hang out with celebrities.

"You can't keep such a talent under wraps," Suzy Menkes wrote in British Vogue. Except he did.

Until now.

In late 2021, Mr. Blazy, now 39, became the creative director of Bottega Veneta, after its previous designer, Daniel Lee, who had reinvented the brand in only three years, departed under a cloud of rumors about misbehavior and high employee turnover. Mr. Blazy, who had been Mr. Lee's No. 2, inherited not just his headline gig, but a house shrouded in innuendo and in need of yet another sprinkling of fairy dust. What did he do?

He changed leather into denim, flannel, ribbed cotton and knit and fooled everyone. He pulled the rug out from under assumptions in the most gracious way and made the everyday into precious objects that only the wearer really understood. He created a world — where nothing is quite as it seems — and populated it with an entire assortment of passers-by. He played sleight of hand with the hierarchy of taste.

And he did it so effectively that this month Bergdorf Goodman in New York, which always devotes its Fashion Week windows to what Linda Fargo, the senior vice president for fashion and store presentation, described as "the best fashion of the season," filled three of its windows with Bottega — and only Bottega. Two years into the job, Mr. Blazy hasn't just redefined a brand; he has defined a direction.

Lately there has been a growing rift in the fashion world between designers who make content and designers who make clothes. The content crew considers fashion as a subset of entertainment; the clothes crew sees fashion as a service.

The appointment of Pharrell Williams as creative director of Louis Vuitton men's wear was in many ways the apotheosis of the content phenomenon, in which what matters is the spectacle and how it resonates through the world. The garments serve as souvenirs that allow you to buy into the experience and advertise your belonging.

Mr. Blazy has become the epitome of an alternative approach: a designer who puts himself second to the products, the people who make them and the people who buy them. "He doesn't see himself in the driver's seat of the company," said François-Henri Pinault, the chief executive of Kering, the group that owns Bottega Veneta. "He sees himself in the middle of the car."

Which is not to say he doesn't know exactly where everyone is going.

House Building

"I said I wanted to go against the stream of the monovision," Mr. Blazy said, talking about his initial pitch to Mr. Pinault. He was in his office in the Bottega Veneta headquarters in Milan, wearing a white Patagonia T-shirt and faded jeans.

He told Mr. Pinault he thought Bottega should focus on craft, rather than design; that it should be "a house, not a brand." That may sound like semantics but is the difference between a garment that advertises its point of origin and a garment that slips seamlessly into a wardrobe. And it was very different from the approach of Mr. Lee, who had made Bottega so associated with a single color — a bright, herbalicious green — that you could identify a piece from blocks away. It also explains a lot about how Mr. Blazy approaches not his job, but the world.

When he moved into his office, which was a white box, he had the walls repaneled in wood tinted a rich brown so they looked like a "chalet in Chamonix," and the room felt more domestic. Now it is anchored at one end by a seating area with an Isa Genzken Nefertiti head on a pedestal and, at the other, by a long table for meetings. The table has a bowl of Ricola lemon mint lozenges, but no computer.

"I did not open a computer for the last six months," Mr. Blazy said. "I have two, but I don't use them so much. I sketch a lot and talk a lot and look at books, and I have a phone." On the floor, below enormous windows, were 16 piles of paper, each one corresponding to a different collection or project: perfume, new store concepts, the fanzines he creates with people he admires (most recently the British designer Hussein Chalayan, which involved Mr. Chalayan playing with pen and ink, watercolor and glitter to draw pieces from Mr. Blazy's last show).

On the walls were a series of artworks. Mr. Blazy collects first drafts. It started, he said, because that's all he could afford, and he liked the idea that they were "the first expression of something." Then, he said, he couldn't stop.

"It's not that I need to have more more more," he said. "But two or three times a year I try to find something that makes me happy to live with. I would rather have my money on the wall than in the bank."

When he likes something — Marlboro Lights (he smokes a pack a day); stracciatella (the ice cream with tiny shavings of chocolate that he loves so much he had a rug designed in its image for his last show; it is now in his office); the Gaetano Pesce chairs he commissioned for the show before that — he whispers, "It's wonderful," and his eyes light up like a 10-year-old seeing snow for the very first time.

"He can get inspired by anything," said Pierre Debusschere, the image and music director for Bottega, who is a close friend.

The way Raf Simons — the co-creative director of Prada, who has been Mr. Blazy's boss twice, and is one of his closest friends — puts it is: "Matt is very free in his head. He has no fear of showing anything he believes in creatively. He always had so many ideas: Add latex kitchen gloves! What about a marching band jacket? Some made completely no sense, and some were so genius I would say, 'Of course, we are going to do that.'"

Avoiding Pigeonholing

"In the past, I've been proposed a few beautiful houses," Mr. Blazy said, talking about job offers that came his way before Bottega Veneta.

He wouldn't name names, saying only that "one was very beautiful, about craft, one was very commercial but still about fashion, and one was a smaller house that I thought could be reactivated without being passé. But I never felt it was the right time. I saw a lot of designers taking stuff quickly, and for me it was important to build myself first. I wanted to know my job. Know myself."

Mr. Blazy grew up in Paris. His father is an expert in pre-Columbian art, and his mother a historian and researcher; he has an older brother who is an airplane pilot and a twin sister who works in Singapore. He was a rambunctious kid — so much so that when he was 13, his parents sent him to a Marist school in the French countryside, and when that didn't take, to Pangbourne College, a military boarding school in England for a year. (He said he liked it.)

He thought about going into archaeology but ended up at La Cambre, the fashion school in Brussels, because his mother thought it would be good for him to have a skill; Julien Dossena, the creative director of Rabanne, was in his class; Anthony Vaccarello, the creative director of Saint Laurent, was a year above. His graduate collection was about Claudie Haigneré, the first Frenchwoman in space, who became the minister of science, and involved "big fur coats covered in silver fabric," Mr. Blazy said. "I had a lot of fun."

Mr. Simons liked the collection so much he offered Mr. Blazy a job at his namesake label as a men's designer. A designer named Pieter Mulier was already working there, and he and Mr. Blazy soon became a couple.

"We did everything together," Mr. Simons said. "Go to fabric fairs in Paris, go to the movies, go on vacation."

Four years later, however, and still in his 20s, Mr. Blazy jumped to the Margiela Artisanal collection, that brand's equivalent of couture. That's where he began to experiment with the idea of transformation, using one kind of material (plastic hair combs) to represent another (fringe).

"I could really use my passion digging, being curious," he said. But, he said, he was worried he would be pigeonholed as a conceptualist, so he ended up hopscotching to Céline, when Phoebe Philo was creative director, to work on the more commercial precollections and, from there, to Calvin Klein, where he teamed up with Mr. Simons and Mr. Mulier once again.

It was like a "high school reunion," Mr. Blazy said. "It was very romantic. We're going to meet new people, we're going to live in New York."

He and Mr. Mulier rented a weekend place in Connecticut and got a rescue puppy called John John.

But then the Trump election happened, and the Calvin collections became less about the American dream than the American nightmare, somewhat to the dismay of PVH, the conglomerate that owned Calvin Klein. Mr. Simons and his inner circle were fired abruptly after two years.

"It was hell," Mr. Blazy said. "Like when you have your boxes on the street." His visa, which was employer-dependent, was revoked. He thought about leaving fashion. Instead he ended up going to Los Angeles to help the artist Sterling Ruby with a collection he showed during the Pitti Uomo trade fair, in Florence.

That's when Daniel Lee, who had been the design director at Céline when Mr. Blazy was there and had just been tasked with updating Bottega Veneta, came calling. And though Mr. Blazy had reportedly gotten fed up with Mr. Lee's erratic leadership and resigned after a show in Detroit, when Leo Rongone, the chief executive, was looking for Mr. Lee's replacement, "It was clear we had the right person already here."

The Anti-Pharrell

Mr. Blazy approached Bottega Veneta with two goals: First, to challenge himself to make something that is wearable. "Because we are expensive, it should be an investment," he said. And second, to interact with the world we live in. "Timeless is a word I just cannot hear anymore," he said. "It's more about a responsibility we have as designer to offer something that lasts." But also is not boring.

The first thing he did was reduce the size of the design teams so that everyone could sit around the same table. Then he involved the craftspeople (the leather workers and fabric developers) in every conversation.

"He knows everyone's name," Mr. Rongone said. "He listens to everyone." He brought a "new mood" to the studio, Mr. Pinault said. That's how those leather jeans — "the first thing I asked for on the first day in the first meeting," he said — came about.

The first response was "not possible," Mr. Blazy said. Then the teams started going through test after test — about 30 to 40, he said — until one day his staff brought him a sample, "and I thought it was cotton," he said. "I'll always remember that day." Those "denim" jeans, which cost $6,900, sold out in two weeks, he said.

Mr. Blazy believes in products that serve a function, like the Andiamo bag, a practical intrecciato style that Mr. Rongone said has become Bottega's best-selling item, and products that are unique, like a "sardine bag" from the last collection that comes with a Murano glass handle shaped like a Brancusi fish. No two handles are exactly alike (though there is a more accessible brass version). Twenty-five such bags were produced, costing $11,000 each, of which Bergdorf got three — "and they sold immediately," Ms. Fargo said. At this stage, said Mr. Pinault, Bottega is close to becoming the third-largest brand in the group, just after Gucci and Saint Laurent, and vying with Balenciaga.

"Even their most commercial pieces are special," Ms. Fargo said. "We're all in on it."

Mr. Blazy recently got his own apartment in Milan, after surfing a series of Airbnbs. (Mr. Mulier and Mr. Blazy split up this year; they are friends and share custody of the dog, though the breakup is still too hard for him to talk about.) The apartment, at the top of a 1960s Modernist building, looks a bit like a houseboat inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright: dark wood, slanted ceilings, with a step up on one side to a tiny balcony covered in greenery.

"I walked in and thought, This looks familiar," Mr. Blazy said. It turned out he was renting the same apartment Mr. Simons had rented for a time during a stint as creative director of Jil Sander from 2005 to 2012.

He shares the flat during the week with Mr. Debusschere. They have music planning meetings in the kitchen late at night over drinks, and more corporate meetings in the morning, looking over the roofs of Milan and drinking coffee. Mr. Blazy often brings art from his house to his office, and vice versa. He shot the most recent Bottega ad campaign in the courtyard of the apartment, featuring Mariacarla Boscono and his very stoic-looking doorman.

Lately he has been thinking a lot about nature. "I'm interested in fish," he said to his team. "Can we look at birds? I saw this woman in the street. She was walking with double shorts. I think it's interesting. Can we try? Maybe it's too perfect. Can we try to make it less perfect?" And so on.

When they are in the studio, he said, he asks his team, "Would you wear this?" Sometimes they say no. Then, he asks them, "Why did you design it?"

Last season he began styling his shows himself, which he will do again this season. "I would rather make my own mistakes," he said.

He is glad he took his time in stepping forward. "Because now, even if I doubt, I know a question mark can become not just 'I don't know,'" he said. "It can become an adventure."



CARMINE ROMANO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

To Matthieu Blazy, the creative director of Bottega Veneta, "two voices are better than one." Four are even better. Below are some looks from Bottega Veneta's 2023 collections in Milan. Bottom, from left, are some celebrities in Bottega Veneta: Uma Thurman, Yara Shahidi and Michelle Yeoh.





LEFT AND ABOVE, FILIPPO FIOR

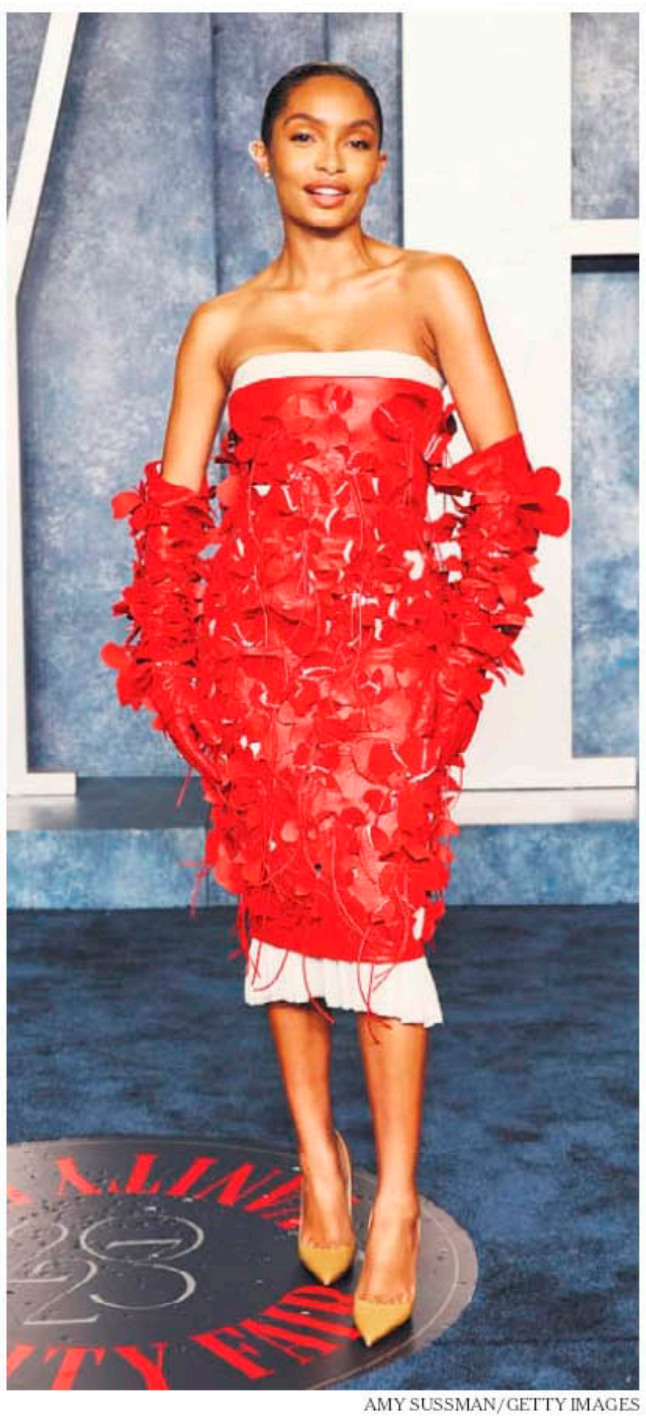


MATTEO CORNER/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

'Because we are expensive, it should be an investment.'



DAVID LIVINGSTON/GETTY IMAGES



AMY SUSSMAN/GETTY IMAGES



JON KOPALOFF/GETTY IMAGES

“Our democracy should work for the people. Americans don’t want to live like this — we deserve a green, just and joyful planet.”
Ebony Twilley Martin, executive director of Greenpeace USA, on obstacles to having a meaningful effect on climate change. PAGE 2

A SPECIAL SECTION

Climate Forward

The New York Times

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

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HOPE AND DESPAIR ON A BOILING PLANET



MARK ABRAMSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Tulare Lake in California’s Central Valley, dammed and drained by the mid-20th century, has refillled this summer to swallow farmland and roads after climate-amplified storms and near-record levels of melting snowpack in the mountains.

As efforts to control climate change are on the rise across the globe, the challenges are steeper than ever.

By DAVID GELLES

On any given day, there is good reason to be both exceedingly optimistic about the progress being made to combat climate change, and also deeply concerned about the threats presented by a rapidly warming planet.

Take a single Wednesday last month: Aug. 16. On that day, the White House celebrated the first anniversary of the signing of the Inflation Reduction Act. President Biden’s signature climate legislation is providing hundreds of billions of dollars to subsidize the build-out of clean energy around the country, turbocharging efforts to shift the economy away from planet-warming fossil fuels.

At the very same time, however, a flurry of extreme weather events were battering the globe. Hurricane Hilary, which would go on to lash Southern California as a rare tropical storm, formed in the Pacific Ocean. Portland and other cities in the Northwest United States were sizzling under an unusual heat wave. And Japan was cleaning up from a destructive typhoon.

It was a dizzying combination of good news and epic disasters that captured the disorienting moment in which we find ourselves.

On the one hand, a new green revolution is genuinely underway, with trillions of dollars being spent to reduce planet-warming emissions. On the other hand, the destructive effects of climate change are now squarely upon us, and poised to get worse, scientists predict.

“The basis for both the hope and the fear has increased,” Al Gore, the former vice president, said in an interview. “That may sound like a paradox, but I’ve never been more hopeful that we are going to solve this crisis, and there’s never been clearer evidence of how rapidly this crisis is getting much worse, faster than expected.”

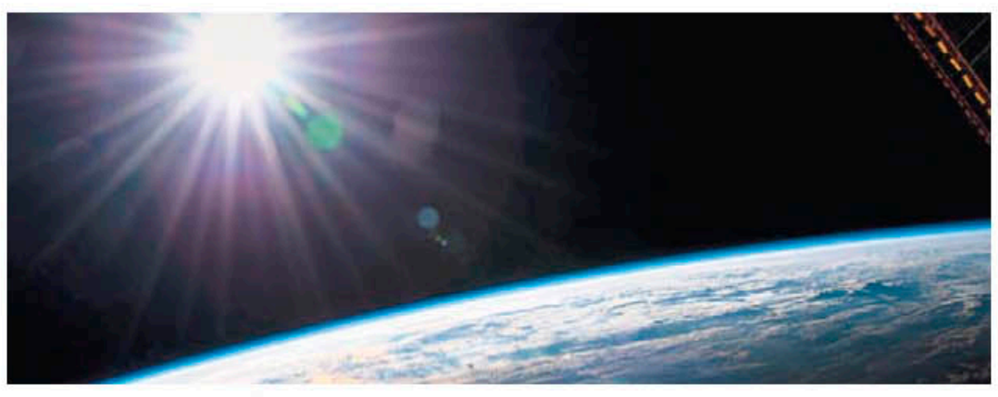
It’s this tension — between progress and inertia, between a sustainable future and an untenable status quo — that will animate a full day of live journalism at The New York Times Climate Forward event on Thursday.

CONTINUED ON PAGE F2



4 ACTIVISM

Michael Bloomberg is spending some of his billions to shut down petrochemical plants. BY DAVID GELLES



8 SPACE

The wireless transfer of space-based solar power, once science fiction, is gaining interest. BY NELL GALLOGLY



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The pressure on the construction industry to build more sustainably is mounting fast. BY DEBRA KAMIN

FROM THE COVER

Hope and Despair on a Boiling Planet

CONTINUED FROM PAGE F1

Timed to coincide with the United Nations General Assembly session in New York City, the event will feature conversations with Mr. Gore; Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store of Norway; President William Ruto of Kenya; Bill Gates, a founder of Microsoft and the founder of Breakthrough Energy; the tidying-up expert and author Marie Kondo; the former Environmental Protection Agency administrator Gina McCarthy; and many other climate leaders.

Together, they will be taking stock of a crisis that is reshaping our planet, transforming economies, straining our food system and challenging humans to adapt to a warmer world. In the past few months alone, record heat, unusually warm oceans, and disappearing sea ice have shattered records and alarmed the scientific community, while unprecedented wildfires, floods and storms have wreaked havoc around the globe.

"We have 100-year floods occurring every five years, fires sweeping across the country, and respiratory illnesses are on the rise," said Ebony Twilley Martin, executive director of Greenpeace USA. "It's no wonder that two-thirds of Americans want action on climate change."

But while there are indeed growing calls for action on climate, according to the Pew Research Center, remaking the world's energy, transportation, agricultural and industrial systems is no small task.

In Europe and the United States, a growing percentage of electricity is being generated with wind turbines and solar power, and more electric vehicles are taking to the road. Yet across much of the rest of the world, new coal plants are still being built, and a growing middle class is consuming more plastics, fuels and meat.

So-called climate deniers — some industry leaders, influential politicians and members of the general public — are skeptical of the science and often equally opposed to the proposed solutions, and some fossil fuel companies continue to block efforts to reduce emissions.

And while world leaders pledged to try and keep global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels at the United Nations climate summit in Paris in 2015, that goal looks unachievable today.

Against this backdrop, calls to phase out the use of coal, gas and oil are growing more urgent than ever before.

"With a growing global population, energy demands are only going up, and fossil fuels are absolutely not the answer to this increased demand," said Ms. McCarthy, the former E.P.A. administrator. "We need to install more wind, solar and other existing clean energy solutions that are now cheaper and healthier than fossil fuels."

António Guterres, the United Nations secretary general, has grown impassioned in his calls to phase out fossil fuels and draw down greenhouse gas emissions. "The era of global warming has ended," he said recently. "The era of global boiling has arrived."

Activists are disrupting sporting events, shutting down highways and taking to the streets. And young people are increasingly engaged, bringing lawsuits and challenging politicians and corporate interests.

"It definitely is a David versus Goliath fight," Nalleli Cobo, a young activist from Los Angeles who grew up near an active oil well and developed cancer at age 19, said during the March to End Fossil Fuels in New York. "But as a person of faith, I'm very happy to be David in this fight. It's a reminder of the collective power that we have."

And business leaders and philanthropists are increasingly engaged. Michael Bloomberg, the former mayor of New York, has made climate action a core part of his charitable strategy and is spending more than $1 billion on efforts to shut down coal, gas and petrochemical plants.

It will take trillions of dollars, not just billions, however, to build out clean energy infrastructure around the world, while at the same time adapting to a hotter planet.

There is tentative hope that proposed reforms to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund could help unlock some of that capital, sending it to developing countries — especially in Africa, which has 60 percent of the world's solar energy potential and almost a third of the minerals that will be needed to electrify transportation and the power grid.

"If you think about the attributes and the assets that we're going to need in order to survive and thrive this century, Africa is uniquely well endowed," said James Irungu Mwangi, a Kenyan entrepreneur who helped organize the recent Africa Climate Summit. "Investing in Africa and climate positive growth is one of the best chances the world has of getting anywhere close to the Paris goals."

But more than money, what is needed, climate advocates say, is a wholesale reimagining of the world and our place in it.

"The single biggest obstacle to having a meaningful effect on climate change is the narrative that nature and humanity are disconnected or separate," said the Rev. Lennox Yearwood Jr., president and chief executive of the Hip-Hop Caucus, an advocacy group working to stop the expansion of fossil fuels.

Mr. Yearwood said that as climate disasters multiply, there is a growing need for people across the world to recognize that this is the only planet we have. "We must begin to center the human impact of climate change," he said, "and understand how it intersects with all aspects of our daily lives."

Only then, he said, will we have a chance of solving what may be the greatest collective action problem in human history.



MASON TRINCA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



MAX WHITTAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Employees from Enel Green Power, left, at work at the Roseland solar and storage plant in Riesel, Texas, expected to be the company's largest solar plant in the United States and Canada with over 1.2 million solar panels. Below, Maui County firefighters after wildfires burned through Kula, Hawaii, in August.

EXPERT ADVICE

Obstacles, Priorities and Hope

The urgent need to address the conditions that are causing climate change — and to lessen the impact as temperatures climb and environmental catastrophes mount — has drawn widespread engagement from governments, politicians, industries, scientists, advocacy groups and concerned citizens. Leaders from many of the fields will be speaking, presenting and discussing their efforts at The New York Times Climate Forward event in New York on Thursday. We asked a sampling of participants to reply in advance to three questions about the state of the response to the environmental challenges. Their answers, which have been edited and condensed, are included here.

What is the biggest obstacle to a real effect on climate change?

José Andrés: *chef, humanitarian and founder of World Central Kitchen*

We fail to invest in local food systems. In the aftermath of climate disasters, we must listen to the needs of those impacted and empower local solutions that put food at the center of recovery. Food has the power to heal people and rebuild communities, but if food is not prioritized, we will only continue providing unsustainable aid rather than investing in fixing the root causes of hunger and poverty. World Central Kitchen, the emergency response nonprofit I created after the 2010 Haiti earthquake, is leading with this approach in places from Hawaii to Morocco to Ukraine. I hope we're able to influence how governments, bigger N.G.O.s, and U.N. agencies do their work, too.

Gina McCarthy: *former national White House climate adviser and administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency*

We're already seeing real economic and health benefits to communities across red and blue states thanks to the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act (I.R.A.). So now is the time to reach out to people in communities all across America to [get] them excited about the clean energy transition because it is not just possible, it's happening. All we have to do is make sure people are aware of and taking advantage of the enormous tax credits and rebate opportunities in the I.R.A. that will help families save money, grow good-paying clean energy jobs, clean up our air, and transform our economy in ways that make all of us safer, healthier and more secure.

Ebony Twilley Martin: *executive director of Greenpeace USA*

The No. 1 driver of the climate crisis is the production of fossil fuels like oil and gas, but the biggest obstacle we face in changing it is that our democracy is being dismantled in front of our eyes. There has been a noticeable, purposeful escalation of efforts to criminalize and silence peaceful protest, dissent and advocacy in recent years. Unfortunately, these laws have a disproportionate impact on the same Black and Brown communities who are most impacted by Big Oil's pollution and discrimination of all kinds. Historically excluded from decision making that impacts communities like mine, peaceful protest and expressing dissent are some of the most important tools we have to advocate for the world we deserve. Our democracy should work for the people. Americans don't want to live like this — we deserve a green, just and joyful planet.

Michael Bloomberg: *U.N. special envoy on climate ambition and solutions, founder of Bloomberg L.P. and Bloomberg Philanthropies, and former mayor of New York City*

The data is clear that we need to stop burning coal, which is the single largest contributor to climate change. We've made enormous progress in the United States and Europe — working with the Sierra Club, our foundation has helped retire 70 percent of all U.S. plants since 2010 — but the global north must do more to help the global south replace coal with clean energy, and our foundation is working to do that in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Jason Grumet: *chief executive, American Clean Power Association*

The last year has dramatically accelerated the transition to clean energy. Over the last 12 months alone, private-sector investment in building out new clean energy resources in the United States exceeded the combined clean power investment for the prior eight years. The bad news is that technology innovation is not being matched by innovation in federal, state and local decision making, especially around approving transmission lines that are required to connect clean energy production to major manufacturing and population centers.



SARAH BLESENER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Young people led the way for the March to End Fossil Fuels in Manhattan last weekend.

If you had to pick one thing that you would be allowed to do unilaterally to slow climate change, what would it be?

Pedro J. Pizarro: *president and chief executive of Edison International, a public utility holding company*

I would significantly expand the interstate, high-capacity transmission system across the United States to connect renewable-rich regions to urban centers. This would help support economy-wide emissions reductions while bolstering grid resilience against climate impacts. This would also have an almost immediate impact and accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy.

Anthony Myint: *executive director of Zero Foodprint, a food and agricultural nonprofit*

Make regenerative agriculture the norm! Ensuring that farmers have the knowledge, resources and community support to farm with nature is an optimistic, no-regrets climate solution. This isn't a scenario that requires us to give up things we enjoy and in an attempt to do less harm. This is a hopeful opportunity to mainstream a win-win-win solution that benefits farmers, corporations, and society as a whole. We already possess the tools necessary for our communities to build resilience, improve water cycles, increase biodiversity, nutrient density and farmer prosperity. Let's invest in them at scale.

Calvin Butler: *president and chief executive of Exelon, a public utility company*

I'd pursue greater electrification as the grid gets cleaner, more reliable and resilient — everything from personal electric vehicles to electric school buses to the way we power our homes and buildings. Investing in infrastructure and upgrading the energy grid so it can support increased demand and maintain reliability will be key to enabling a clean energy future and combating climate change. But we must do this in a way that keeps energy affordable for all customers and takes into consideration the uniqueness of their energy needs, which is often determined by a host of factors, including income and geography.

Rev. Lennox Yearwood Jr.: *president and chief executive, Hip Hop Caucus*

Stop the extraction and production of fossil fuels, like petrochemicals and liquefied natural gas.

Jason Grumet

The key to slowing climate change is speeding up the shift from polluting energy sources to clean ones. While most people embrace this goal, few appreciate the scale and urgency of the challenge. Fewer still seem willing to embrace the fact that every community in the country must play a role in this economic transformation. The climate crisis and the climate solution will affect everyone. If I could do one thing, I would wave a magic wand casting a "We're all in this together" spell. To quote the great philosopher, Mr. Spock, "The needs of the many must outweigh the needs of the few."

What actions would you encourage younger people to take to slow the changes that are most likely to have a significant impact on their lives?

Ebony Twilley Martin

I encourage voters to prioritize supporting climate and justice champions at the state and local level, and elect candidates that will work to protect our democracy. I would also encourage them to call their senators and tell them to oppose laws which suppress voting rights, and anti-protest legislation in your state. We cannot achieve our goals without having a strategic approach to building our political influence, electing true climate champions and then holding them accountable to the will of the people.

José Andrés

I am inspired by all the young people who have inherited so many challenges and are still approaching the task of healing a broken planet with such passion and optimism. I encourage them to remember that food must be a central part of the solution to combating climate change, to fighting hunger and poverty, to increasing access and improving equity, and so much more. That's why earlier this year, I was proud to launch the Global Food Institute at George Washington University, with the goal of creating innovative food policies and training the next generation of food systems leaders.

Rev. Lennox Yearwood Jr.

I would encourage younger people to continue to learn about the effects of our climate crisis and the solutions we can enact to slow the changes. Pay attention to the decisions our business and political leaders make and hold them accountable. And use all of your knowledge, skills and creativity to help create the sustainable future you envision.

ACTIVISM



BRYAN TARNOWSKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Michael Bloomberg's War on Plastics

He is trying to shut down petrochemical plants, but that may be tougher than his effort on coal plants.

By DAVID GELLES

Michael Bloomberg is many things: former New York City mayor, founder of a financial data company, failed presidential candidate and the 11th richest man in the world.

Since leaving public office 10 years ago, Mr. Bloomberg, 81, has also emerged as perhaps the world's single largest funder of climate activism, making himself an expensive thorn in the side of the fossil fuel industry. The former mayor says that so far he has spent $500 million in an effort to shut down coal and gas plants. This month he said he planned to spend another $500 million on the effort.

The campaign against coal was largely successful. Coal is dirty and expensive, and Mr. Bloomberg's money helped retire more than 70 percent of the coal-burning power plants in the country, according to the Sierra Club and other organizations, or about 370.

Now he is going after a more challenging target: new petrochemical plants that make fertilizer, plastics and packaging. It won't be easy.

In recent years, coal had become an increasingly costly and uneconomical way to generate electricity, making plant closures easier to achieve. But plastics and chemicals face no such economic headwinds. In fact, the petroleum industry sees these industries as its future as cars electrify and the burning of fossil fuels declines, so it is investing heavily.

While the new campaign, called Beyond Petrochemicals, has scored a few wins, the petrochemicals business is booming and highly profitable, and plastics remain cheap and in demand. And the industry is fighting back with its own counter effort: Beyond Bloomberg.

Companies and local economic development groups argue that Mr. Bloomberg's efforts are a heavy-handed approach to a nuanced problem and that the world needs more products made with petrochemicals, not less. They add that his efforts are costing people jobs and hurting an area badly in need of economic growth.

"Attempts to shut down American chemical manufacturing are a bet against millions of hard-working men and women in our industry," Chris Jahn, the chief executive of the American Chemistry Council, said in a statement. He added that Mr. Bloomberg's efforts "would send essential jobs overseas and threaten America's leadership to innovate and compete with countries like China."

Petrochemicals remain an essential part of modern life, used to make clothing, cars, electronics, fuel and fertilizer, not to mention solar panels and other equipment needed in the transition to cleaner energy sources. There are no easy substitutes for most of the products, and the heavy global demand means that if chemical and fertilizer plants aren't built in the United States, many will instead simply be built in other countries that may have weaker regulations to protect workers and the environment.

But the petrochemical industry is also a major source of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that are dangerously warming the world.

During a recent interview at the headquarters of Bloomberg LP, the financial data company that has given him an estimated net worth of $96 billion, Mr. Bloomberg said he was trying to help slow climate change, which he regarded as an existential threat to humanity.



JAMES ESTRIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Above, the Marathon refinery in Lions, La., the site of a recent fire. The refinery is in an area known as Cancer Alley. At left, Michael Bloomberg, who wants to stop new petrochemical plants that make fertilizer, plastics and packaging.

"If there's something that can destroy the Earth and kill all living people, then it's hard to argue you shouldn't focus on that," he said. "I want my kids, your kids, to be able to have a life."

Mr. Bloomberg began his campaign against fossil fuels before he left public office. In 2011, his foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, began funding Beyond Coal, the effort to shut down coal plants across the country being led by the Sierra Club. Tax records show that the foundation has given more than $120 million to the group since 2014 and tens of millions more to other nonprofit organizations, including the League of Conservation Voters, the Energy Foundation and the Southern Environmental Law Center.

Last year, Mr. Bloomberg announced a campaign to block the construction of 120 planned petrochemicals plants, most of them in Texas, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia, pledging to spend $85 million on the effort.

Mr. Bloomberg said his motivation was twofold. He says he wants to stop the construction of facilities that would otherwise continue heating up the globe. And he knows how harmful they can be for local communities, and particularly for people of color, who tend to live near the plants.

"If what they're doing is going to kill everyone, I don't care how valuable what they do is," he said.

Petrochemicals are fast becoming the largest driver of global oil demand and is a growing consumer of natural gas, according to the International Energy Agency. The industry is already generating more than $580 billion in revenues annually, and that number is expected to grow to more than $1 trillion a year over the next decade.

Mr. Bloomberg's campaign has already notched at least five significant successes by directing small-scale grants to local activist groups, many of them run by families who live near the proposed plants, as well as multimillion-dollar donations to nonprofit law groups in places like Berkeley, Calif. Together, the activists and lawyers have in recent months helped stop construction of two natural gas facilities, an ethylene plant, a methanol plant and a plastics plant in St. James Parish, La., where Sharon Lavigne, 71, is the face of the resistance.

Ms. Lavigne, who grew up in St. James Parish, is among the most outspoken community activists in a stretch of land between New Orleans and Baton Rouge with many industrial facilities. A few years ago, after watching years of development, she founded Rise St. James, a nonprofit organization that works to block new projects in the area.

The group's billboard towers above freeways in the area, identifying chemical companies that are seeking to expand their operations. Rise St. James was a lead plaintiff in a lawsuit that last year resulted in a judge effectively blocking construction of a new $9.4 billion facility planned by Formosa Plastics.

"It's a very expensive fight," she said. "So that Bloomberg money has helped."

Mr. Bloomberg and Ms. Lavigne declined to say how much money he had contributed to the effort.

'A surround-sound strategy'

On a sweltering Thursday in August, Ms. Lavigne set out for a "Toxic Tour." On these drives around the community, she shows visitors the skyline of smokestacks that now defines a stretch of the Mississippi River that, just a few decades ago, was mostly undeveloped swamp.

There is an Exxon Mobil plant, next to a Marathon Oil facility, which is next to a crude oil pipeline terminal. Across the river is a phosphate factory next to an Occidental Chemical facility, which is beside a Nucor steel plant. More than two dozen major facilities have turned what was once bayou backwaters into what is effectively a city-size industrial park, and companies are angling to build several more plants in the area.

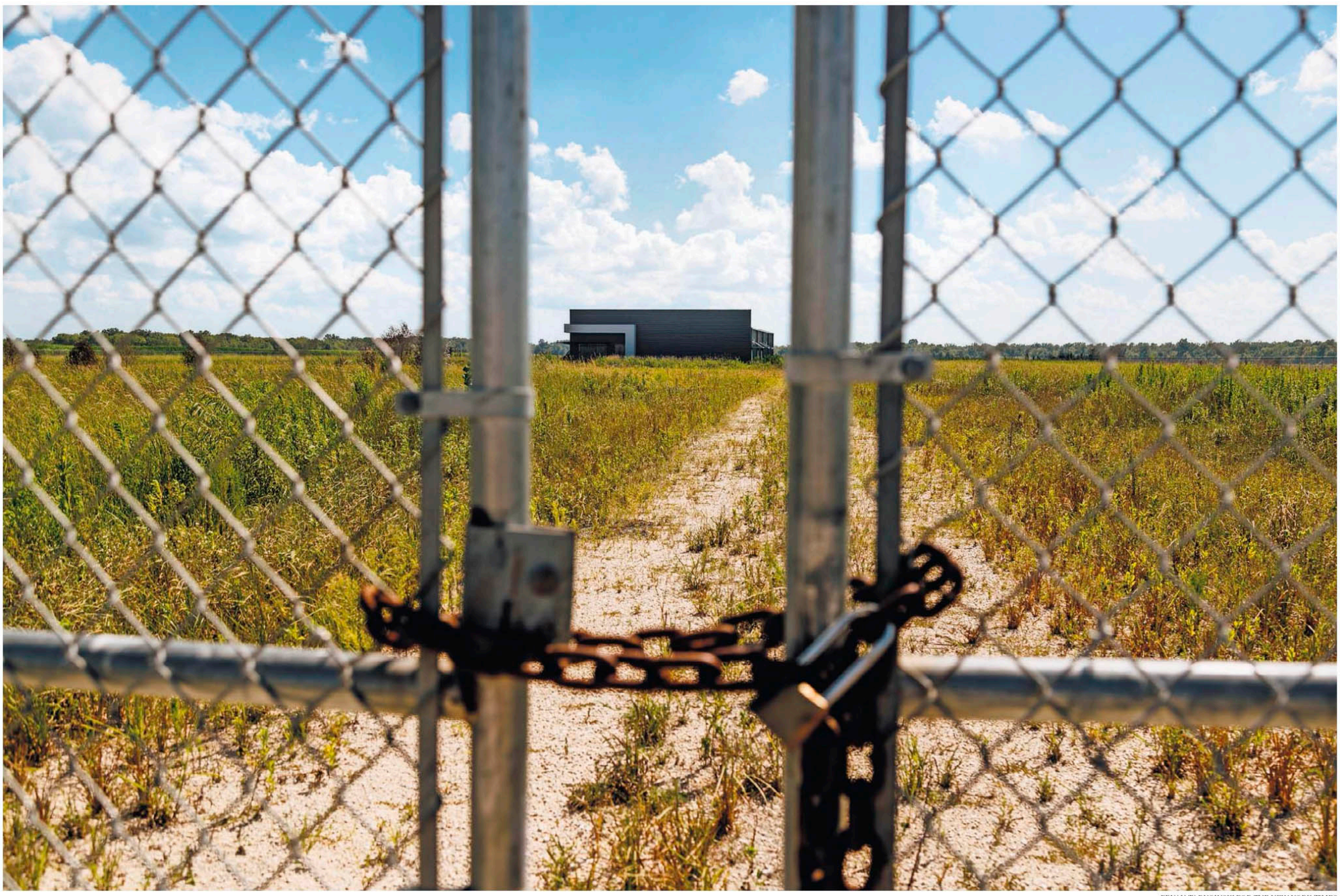
Decades of industrial activity have polluted the soil, air and water. Research by Tulane University has linked the pollution to elevated cancer rates in St. James Parish.

Ms. Lavigne and other local activists

Below, Sharon Lavigne, center, and her daughter, Shamyra Lavigne, speaking with a sheriff during a confrontation near a plot of land where the South Louisiana Methanol complex would have gone.



BRYAN TARNOWSKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



BRYAN TARNOWSKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

have been raising the alarm about industrial pollution for decades to limited effect. But in recent years, an influx of cash from Mr. Bloomberg, as well as his formidable Rolodex, has made them more effective.

They have professionalized their operations, rolling out sophisticated websites, hosting fully catered community meetings and spending big on local advertising. And most importantly, they have hired an army of lawyers that has started a legal onslaught aimed at stymying the petrochemical industry one project at a time.

"We have a surround-sound strategy that is pursuing every single avenue," said Abigail Dillen, the president of Earthjustice, an environmental law group that received $11 million in funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies in 2021. "We are creating uncertainty for the investors. We're creating delays that are making the projects more expensive."

Ms. Dillen and her firm helped win Beyond Petrochemicals' biggest victory to date, stopping the construction of the Formosa plant. Rise St. James and other community groups pressured the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to retract an important permit and conduct a more detailed environmental assessment.

Lawyers from Earthjustice and other environmental law groups sued the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality over the lack of valid air quality permits. Today, after five years of work on the project, it is stalled.

Earthjustice also helped stop the development of a new $2.2 billion facility that was going to be built by South Louisiana Methanol in the area. In that case, residents pressured the Parish council to deny the company's request that the land be rezoned from residential to industrial, while lawyers sued the Environmental Quality Department to revoke an air pollution permit after the company failed to meet a construction deadline.

But their efforts have angered some residents.

Under the midday sun, Ms. Lavigne and the other activists drove down a one-lane dirt road flanked by sugar cane fields to look at a plot of land where the South Louisiana Methanol complex would have gone. As the group peered through a chain-link fence, a pickup truck sped up the road and blocked the group in. The driver got out and confronted Ms. Lavigne, accusing her of trespassing.

After a brief standoff that eventually involved two local sheriffs, tensions eased and the man in the truck explained to Ms. Lavigne that he was the owner of the land that South Louisiana Methanol had planned to build on, and he was expecting a windfall. But when the project was called off, his land was suddenly worth a fraction of what it had been.

'Out-of-state elites'

Mr. Bloomberg's efforts have made him Public Enemy No. 1 in the plastics business.

One Monday in May, the director of government affairs for the American Chemistry Council led a session at the West Virginia Manufacturers Association meeting in Wheeling, W.V. The session was promoted as Beyond Bloomberg and promised to educate attendees about "industry's effort to counter this attack."

In another presentation by the American Chemistry Council and the Ohio Chemistry Technology Council, this one at an industry workshop in Columbus in July, the groups warned attendees about the effort.

"Beyond Petrochemicals will take the most effective components of Bloomberg's previous campaigns: channeling millions of dollars toward existing influential and effective actors and leveraging the power of government," the slide deck read.

Local newspapers in Pennsylvania are also railing against the former mayor. "Butt out, Mr. Bloomberg," an editorial in Pittsburgh Post-Gazette read, accusing Mr. Bloomberg of "using his wealth to impose his will on the people of the Ohio Valley."

And in the area around the Louisiana industrial sites, representatives from dozens of oil, gas and chemical companies, including Exxon Mobil, Chevron and Dow, have joined a new group called the Louisiana Industry Sustainability Council.

"Out-of-state elites are sending nearly $100 million to Louisiana to dictate our future and our way of life," read one of the group's early organizing documents. "Louisianans are the best people to decide what's right for Louisiana — not Michael Bloomberg."

The pushback reflected the inherently undemocratic nature of big philanthropy, said David Callahan, the founder of Inside Philanthropy, an independent news site that covers megadonors. "It goes to the heart of philanthropy's lack of accountability," he said. "Because, yeah, who is Mike Bloomberg to show up and start pushing around Louisianans?"

This isn't the first time people have bristled at being told what to do by Mr. Bloomberg.

As the mayor of New York, he took on sugary soda, trans fats, cigarettes and Styrofoam, using the power of City Hall to curb the use of everyday products he felt were adversely affecting the lives of his constituents, whether they liked it or not.

Mr. Bloomberg is unrepentant. The additional $500 million he has committed will be used to continue his efforts to shut down coal and gas power plants around the country and help promote clean energy projects. And he says he is prepared to spend more to keep fighting the construction of new petrochemical plants.

"Just because it's good economically for you, if it's killing people, I don't think we want to do that," he said.

He dismissed concerns about his efforts limiting economic growth in areas far from New York. "Human beings are innovative," he said. "If they can't make it this way, but there's a profit to be made, they'll find another way to make it."

In fact, he may soon be allocating more money toward his efforts to combat climate change. He has said that he intends to leave his 88 percent stake in Bloomberg LP to his foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies. At that point, it could either sell the company or take it public, resulting in a windfall that could make it the largest charity in the country, surpassing the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation with its $67 billion endowment.

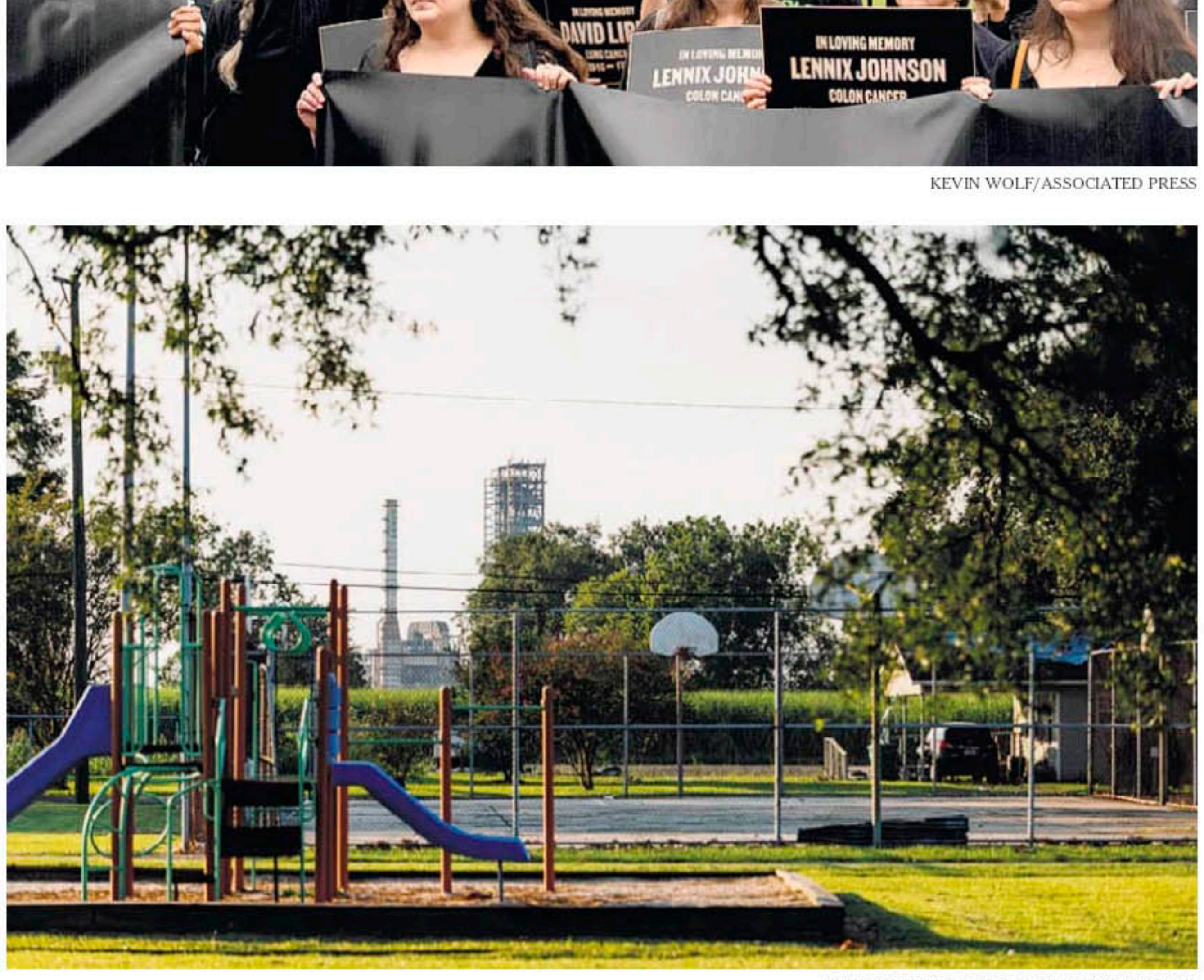
But while Mr. Bloomberg may be ready to spend billions on his campaign, the petrochemicals industry isn't going away. Just five plants have been blocked, and more than 100 are still scheduled for completion soon.



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KEVIN WOLF/ASSOCIATED PRESS



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From top, land where South Louisiana Methanol planned to build a project before protests halted the plan; a cemetery near the Nucor steel factory in Convent, La.; protesters call on President Biden to declare a state of emergency in St. James Parrish, La., during a procession outside the White House last October; and a playground next to the Nucor steel factory in Convent.

IN SPACE

Looking Above for Energy Solutions Below

Space-based solar power, once a topic for science fiction, is gaining interest.

By NELL GALLOGLY

Ali Hajimiri thinks there's a better way to power the planet — one that's not getting the attention it deserves. The Caltech professor of electrical engineering envisages thousands of solar panels floating in space, unobstructed by clouds and unhindered by day-night cycles, wirelessly transmitting massive amounts of energy to receivers on Earth.

This year, that vision moved closer to reality when Mr. Hajimiri, together with a team of Caltech researchers, proved that wireless power transfer in space was possible: Solar panels they had attached to a Caltech prototype in space successfully converted electricity into microwaves and beamed those microwaves to receivers about a foot away, lighting up two LEDs.

The prototype also beamed a tiny but detectable amount of energy to a receiver on top of their lab's building in Pasadena, Calif. The demonstration marks a first step in the wireless transfer of usable power from space to Earth — a power source that Mr. Hajimiri believes will be safer than direct sun rays. "The beam intensity is to be kept less than solar intensity on earth," he said.

Finding alternative energy sources is one of the topics that will be discussed by leaders in business, science and public policy during The New York Times Climate Forward event on Thursday. The Caltech demonstration was a significant moment in the quest to realize space-based solar power — a clean energy technology that has long been overshadowed by other long-shot clean energy ideas, such as nuclear fusion and low-cost clean hydrogen.

If space-based solar can be made to work on a commercial scale, said Nikolai Joseph, a NASA Goddard Space Flight Center senior technology analyst, such stations could contribute as much as 10 percent of global power by 2050.

The idea of space-based solar energy has been around since at least 1941, when the science-fiction writer Isaac Asimov set one of his short stories, "Reason," on a solar station that beamed energy by microwaves to Earth and other planets.

In the 1970s, when a fivefold increase in oil prices sparked interest in alternative energy, NASA and the Department of Energy conducted the first significant study on the topic. In 1995, under the direction of the physicist John C. Mankins, NASA took another look and concluded that investments in space-launch technology were needed to lower the cost before space-based solar power could be realized.

"There was never any doubt about it being technically feasible," said Mr. Mankins, now president of Artemis Innovation Management Solutions, a technology consulting group. "The cost was too prohibitive."

Today, however, the calculus may be changing.

The advent of Elon Musk's SpaceX has brought a steep decline in the cost of rocket launches. From 1970 to 2000, the average low-earth-orbit rocket launch cost was around $18,500 for a kilogram, or 2.2 pounds, of weight; today, the cost has plummeted to as low as $1,500 a kilogram. That reduction has helped drastically reduce estimates for building power stations beyond Earth's atmosphere.

A 1980 review by NASA concluded that the first gigawatt of space-based solar power (enough energy to power 100 million LED bulbs) would cost more than $20 billion ($100 billion today). By 1997, NASA estimated that that number had dropped to about $7 billion ($15 billion today); now, it is estimated to be closer to $5 billion, according to a study conducted for the European Space Agency in 2022.

"I used to be a critic of space-based solar power," said Ramez Naam, a climate and clean energy investor. Mr. Naam is now actively seeking space-based solar companies to invest in. "The dramatically changing cost of space launches has changed everything," he said.

Space-based solar power requires wirelessly transmitting electrical energy across space using microwave or laser power beaming. Unlike laser beams, microwaves can penetrate clouds and rainfall, making them the prime candidate for maximizing solar capacity.

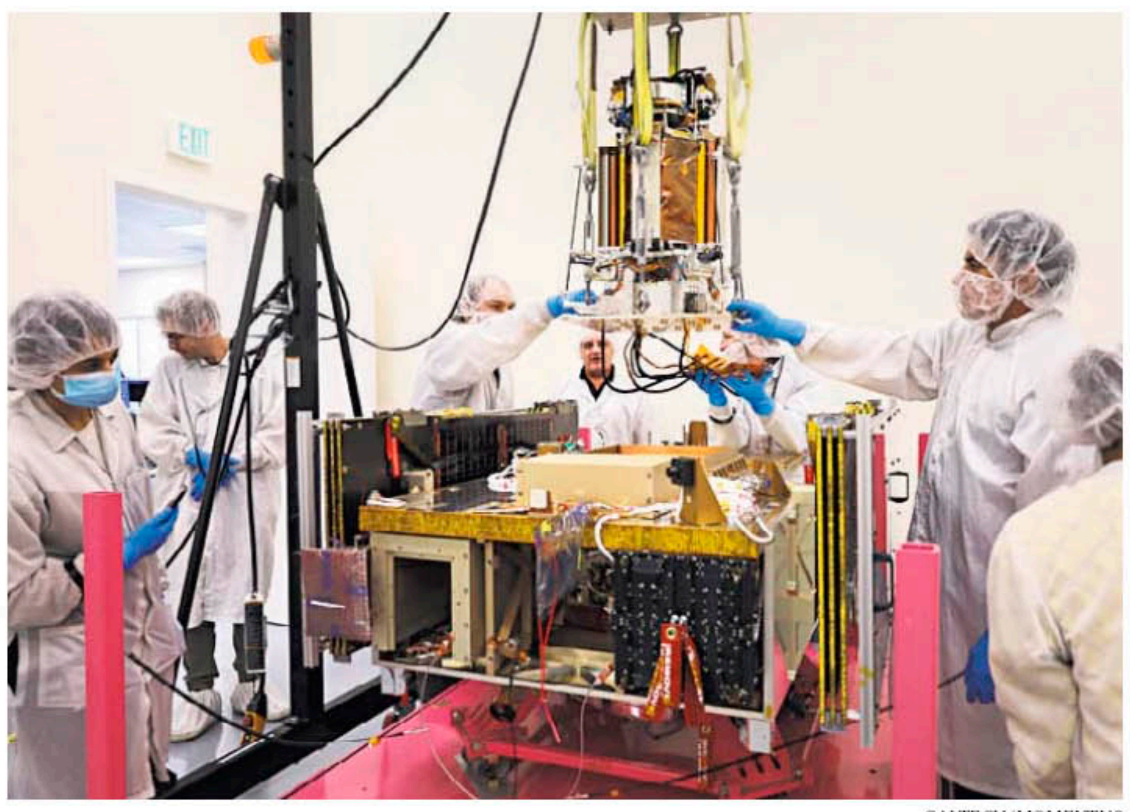
Still, there are engineering hurdles. Though Mr. Hajimiri's team at Caltech proved that the wireless energy transfer of microwaves in space was possible — and even beamed a detectable amount of energy to Earth — they did not beam enough power to Earth to convert it into a usable form.

"No one has demonstrated power beaming more than a few kilometers," said Paul Jaffe, a U.S. Naval Research Laboratory engineer specializing in power-beaming technology. Mr. Hajimiri thinks it can be done. The Caltech engineer says he is working on technologies that would enable a large array of lightweight, sail-like spacecraft, using billions of small transmitting antennas, to create a focused beam that could travel thousands of kilometers to Earth and carry megawatts worth of energy.

The scale of space-based solar power structures is also daunting. The most prominent building in space today is the International Space Station, which measures 357 feet end to end. Space-based solar power systems would be several thousand feet wide, and an army of robots would be needed to autonomously assemble the structures while in orbit.



NASA



CALTECH/MOMENTUS

Top, researchers are working to harness the power of the sun, seen here from the International Space Station, in space to provide usable power on Earth. Above, a Caltech space-borne prototype, now orbiting the planet, has successfully converted electricity into microwaves and beamed it to receivers.

In addition to overcoming technical challenges, researchers must also ensure the safety of wirelessly beaming power to Earth. Microwave and laser beams pose a known risk to human health when operated at certain power densities. Researchers say the power density of space-based solar would be designed to operate within limits set by international governing bodies. Still, no studies have focused on the effect of space-based beaming on human health, the environment or the atmosphere — a critical step for public acceptance of the technology.

Then, inevitably, there will be regulatory challenges. The transmission of radio waves from orbit — including telecommunication, GPS and weather satellites — requires licensing to prevent interference from different users. Solar-power satellites would likely need the approval of the International Telecommunications Union, a United Nations agency, to protect and license their operating frequencies.

The complexity of these challenges places the expected arrival of most space-based solar power projects in the 2030s or 2040s, should they ever get to that point. That's not stopping researchers from pressing forward with the dream of harnessing an uninterrupted, inexhaustible supply of energy from space.

Sanjay Vijendran, an engineer at the European Space Agency, spent much of his life's work on Mars exploration projects, but climate change brought his focus back to Earth. "Is there more that space could be doing to directly help with the climate crisis?" Mr. Vijendran recalled asking himself and his colleagues in 2020. The result was Solaris, a program he leads that will release a report by 2025 on space-based solar power's technical and economic feasibility.

Virtus Solis, based in Michigan, and Space Solar in the United Kingdom are among several start-ups working on space-based solar power. Government agencies — including NASA, the U.S. Air Force, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, the European Space Agency and the China Academy of Space Technology — plan to share reports on space-based solar power within the decade. Since 2019, the U.S. Naval Research Lab has launched several demonstrations of power beaming.

Mr. Jaffe thinks there is no certainty that space-based solar power will work or even be necessary. "It could be that we are going to create a portfolio of alternatives that are good enough for our projected energy, and that makes space-based solar unnecessary," he said.

Mr. Vijendran is also ready to concede that space-based solar power might not work without proper funding. But he sees an absolute need to explore the option, particularly given how little money has been invested in the technology relative to other solutions.

"We're putting billions into nuclear fusion research each year," Mr. Vijendran said. "If you put a billion a year into space-based solar power, we will have this ready in 10 years."

ON EARTH

Protecting Ocean Life

The head of the Wildlife Conservation Society makes a case for the High Seas Treaty.

By TATIANA SCHLOSSBERG

When delegates from countries around the world meet this week at the United Nations, they will begin to ratify a landmark agreement for environmental conservation, climate-change mitigation and biodiversity protection that is known as the High Seas Treaty.

The treaty outlines how the global community can protect, conserve, and benefit equitably from the ocean and its resources. One of its major achievements is the possibility of marine-protected areas, where commercial activities would be banned or limited, in international waters.

The United States will not be among the ratifiers (it has not yet adopted the original treaty under which this agreement was negotiated) but Monica Medina, a former assistant secretary of state for oceans and international environmental and scientific affairs under President Biden and the current president and chief executive of the Wildlife Conservation Society, participated in the negotiations and addressed the U.N. in 2022 about the urgent need and moral obligation to protect the oceans.

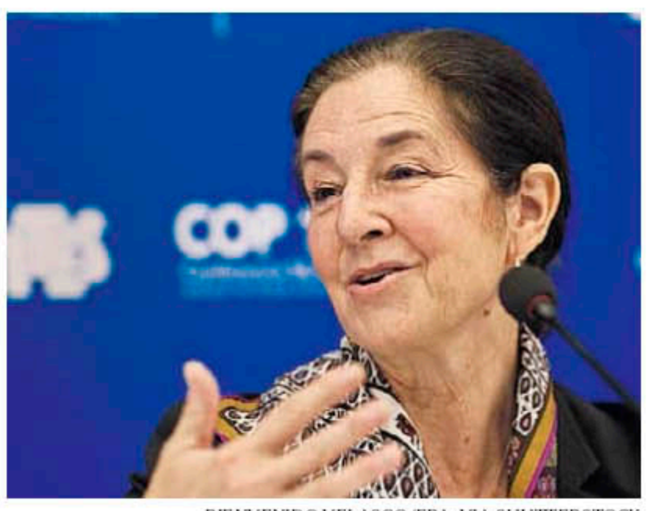
In an interview last month, Ms. Medina, who also worked for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, spoke about the treaty's accomplishments and why it should matter to everyone. She also emphasized the effects of greenhouse-gas emissions on the ocean and how ensuing climate change will affect both people and the planet, also among the topics being discussed by leaders in business, science and policy during The New York Times Climate Forward event on Thursday.

Can you explain why the High Seas Treaty is so consequential, both in terms of environmental protection and international law?

This is a really important development in global international law because the oceans beyond national jurisdiction, outside of 200 nautical miles from any coastline, are a really open space in a way. It's sort of like a field that nobody owns and everybody uses but no one really takes care of.

This particular agreement allows the world to come together and agree to create protected areas, kind of like parks, out in the high seas.

It also allows for a process for sharing all of the really cool information and resources out there, especially genetic information that can be found in those areas.



BIENVENIDO VELASCO/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

Before now, it was just a treasure hunt and nobody had to share any of it, but those areas don't belong to any one country, and that sort of "finders keepers" mentality was going to cause a kind of gold rush of exploitation without anyone knowing what was out there and without the world benefiting from it.

The United States is not part of this treaty. What are the implications of that?

We adhere to it as if we were a member, and we consider most of the defining parts of it to be international law. But there are some that we don't, and that holds us back.

For example, the U.N. is working on regulations for deep-sea mining, and that couldn't be a more important negotiation. We can't participate in the regulatory discussions — we sit as an observer like nonprofit organizations, and the shame of it is, if we were a member, we'd have a vote and a permanent seat of the security council for seabed mining and help govern it forever.

We are not able to really take the benefit of these agreements — we get all of the burdens but none of the benefits by not ratifying it.

Why should people care about a treaty for protecting and conserving the high seas, which are so far away, even from people who live on the coast?

The ocean provides half the oxygen that we breathe, it's a huge source of food, and it connects everyone and everything on the planet. We say there are different oceans, but there is only one big body of water.

It ties people together in ways that they aren't really aware of. The way that ocean currents move affect our day-to-day lives. For example, the Gulf Stream works to keep Northern Europe warm and the tropics more temperate, and that conveyor belt of a current is really important for food production but also for these great big weather systems that actually have made our climate a lot less erratic in the past.

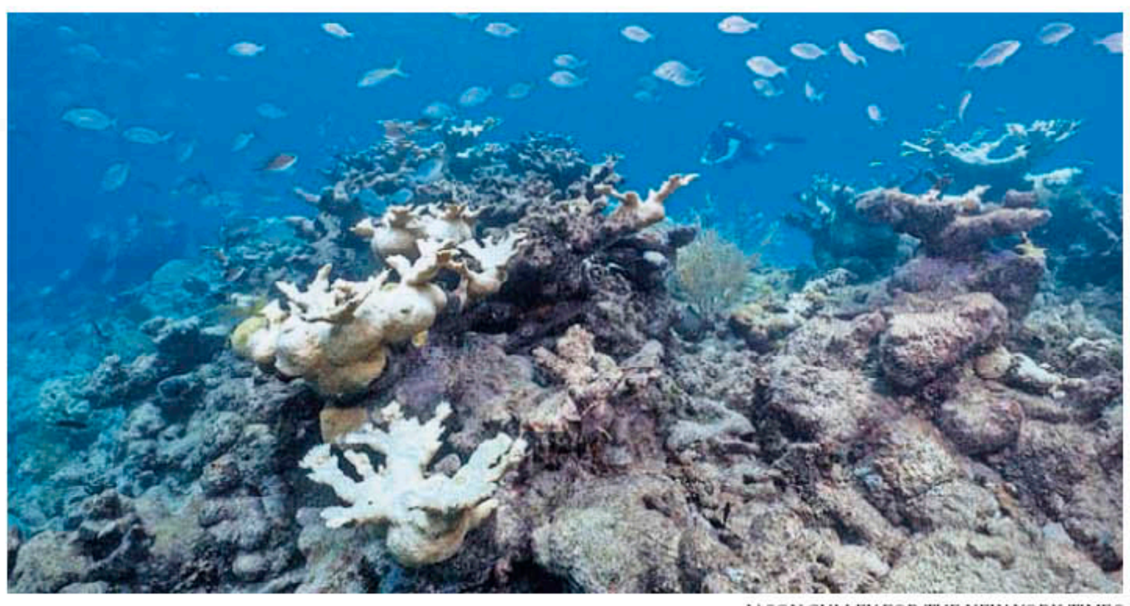
But, if they break down now because of the melting of the ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets, creating sea-level rise and changing these basic weather patterns — they will really make everyone's lives different in the future.

How does this treaty help address the effects of climate change?

Climate change is really stressing the ocean, and we are seeing that here in the U.S., with things like the coral reefs in Florida bleaching terribly, and many of those had just been replanted after a previous bleaching event. We have the technology to help restore these areas, but the ocean is warming so fast that it's really hard to do that.



PATRICK HERTZOG/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES



JASON GULLEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

"We need as much life and vibrancy in the ocean that we possibly can have," said Monica Medina, top left, the president and chief executive of the Wildlife Conservation Society. Top right, an albatross in the sub-Antarctic. Above, bleached coral off the Florida Keys.

With these protected areas, we could take some of those least-impacted places and try to hold onto the nature that is still doing well, so that when an ocean heat wave happens, the ocean can restore itself more easily.

Obviously things change, but it's easier when the ecosystems aren't being impacted by pollution and direct discharge of trash, or are not being overfished, which is a big problem, and these protected areas will help make sure that's the case.

We all have to adapt and prepare. People who haven't really felt the brunt of the force of the oceans are increasingly in harm's way, and we all really need to be learning more about oceans and paying more attention to them and how they're changing.

We need as much life and vibrancy in the ocean that we possibly can have, because it's a big part of this great big planetary bubble. Seventy percent of the planet is ocean, so we need to make more places more resilient for the climate change that is underway and that will come.

OFF THE FIELD

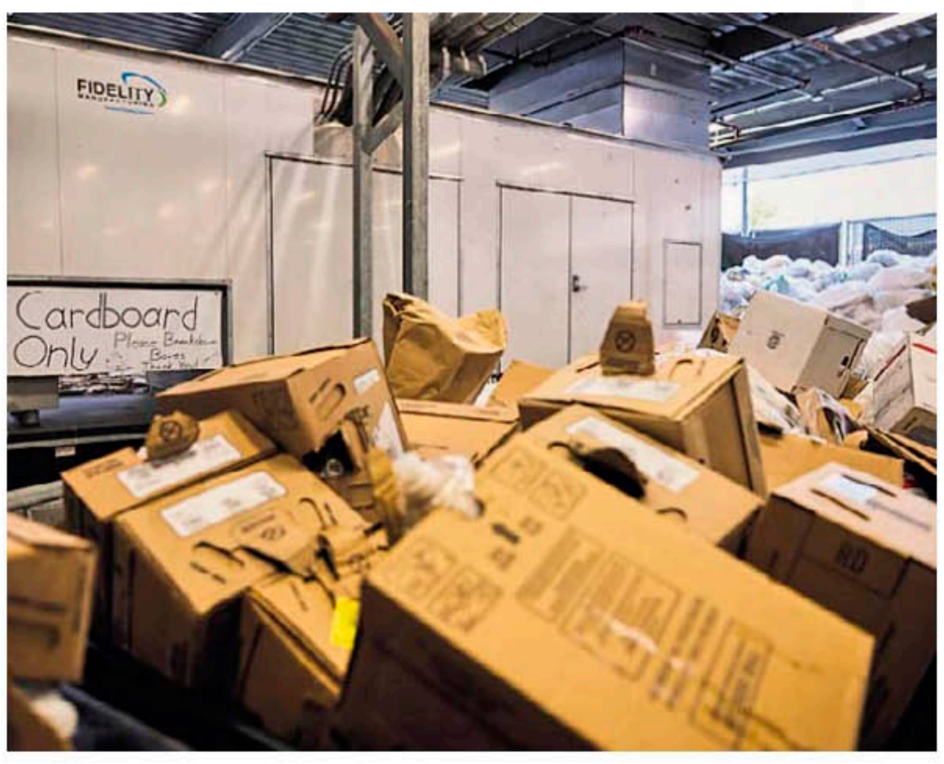
A Team Effort to Reduce Waste

Leagues, teams and stadiums are working to embrace sustainable practices and inspire fans to do the same.

By KEN BELSON









PHOTOGRAPHS BY BEE TROFORT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Clockwise from top: The $1.6 billion Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta is one of the country's greenest stadiums, and the first in the nation to win Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) platinum certification; an urban garden outside the stadium is used in local educational programs; compost and recyclables are sorted in the 6,000-square-foot Resource Recovery Room; and fans are encouraged to play a role in the sustainability effort by using recycling bins.

ATLANTA — The Resource Recovery Room beneath Mercedes-Benz Stadium was humming with activity one afternoon last month. Workers fed food into a compactor for compostable material, aluminum cans into another compactor and tossed other items into a variety of recycling bins.

It was messy work but a critical part of the stadium's ambitious effort to steer more than 90 percent of its waste away from landfills. Critical because recycling and composting help reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions and ambitious because the two-million-square-foot stadium each year welcomes an average of three million visitors and produces more than four million pounds of waste.

"We're making sure that we're not only diverting at the highest level possible," said Andrew Bohenko, who oversees the sustainable initiatives at the stadium, which hosts the N.F.L.'s Atlanta Falcons, M.L.S.'s Atlanta United and hundreds of events, but also insuring "that we're getting multiple reuses out of the materials that we have in the stadium."

Diverting tons of waste from landfills is next-level stuff for one of the country's greenest stadiums. The $1.6 billion building was an environmental trendsetter when it opened in 2017 as the first stadium in the United States to win Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) platinum certification from the United States Green Building Council, which grades sustainable design and energy efficiency.

To win that designation, the stadium was located near ample public transportation, was built with locally sourced and recycled materials and included a 20-foot-high cistern that holds up to 680,000 gallons of rainwater that is used to irrigate the vegetation around the building and reduce flooding nearby.

But Arthur Blank, a co-founder of Home Depot, whose company owns the teams and operates the stadium, wanted the building to run as sustainably as possible, too, which meant reducing as much waste as possible. The 6,000-square-foot Resource Recovery Room was created so dozens of workers could sort compost and recyclables like cardboard and metals into compactors and balers.

Mr. Bohenko and his team partnered with recyclers, garbage haulers and environmental groups, which remove 14 types of recyclable and compostable waste. They pushed vendors to eliminate nonrecyclable material in their packaging and placed clearly marked bins — one for compost, another for recyclables — throughout the building.

In January, the 75,000-seat stadium was deemed a zero waste facility by Green Business Certification Inc., a first for a venue of its size. This year, the stadium expects to spend a net $400,000, or about 13 cents per visitor, to compost and recycle 2,000 tons of waste. But as the staff (and fans) become more efficient at collecting, sorting and recycling, the price should fall.

Waste and emissions at sports venues is a fraction of those produced by the mining, transportation or construction industries, to name a few. But teams and stadiums are the country's social commons where people of all ages and backgrounds meet. That gives venue operators a platform to push their priorities, including the need for sustainable practices.

"We bring people together and give them a good time, and then talk about topics in a nonpolitical way," said Dietmar Exler, the stadium's chief operating officer. "We have a tremendous opportunity, much bigger than we think."

To their surprise, Mr. Exler and Mr. Bohenko found that their message has easily dovetailed with the priorities of fans and customers who visit Mercedes-Benz Stadium. Suite holders have been asking for green amenities like compost bins. Young fans are educating their elders on how to separate their waste and taking tours of the stadium that highlight the venue's sustainability practices.

"Sports organizations are attentive to their social licenses to operate and that includes climate action," said Allen Hershkowitz, a founding director of Sport and Sustainability International, which advises leagues, teams and venue operators throughout the world. "Fans expect their teams to be environmentally responsible."

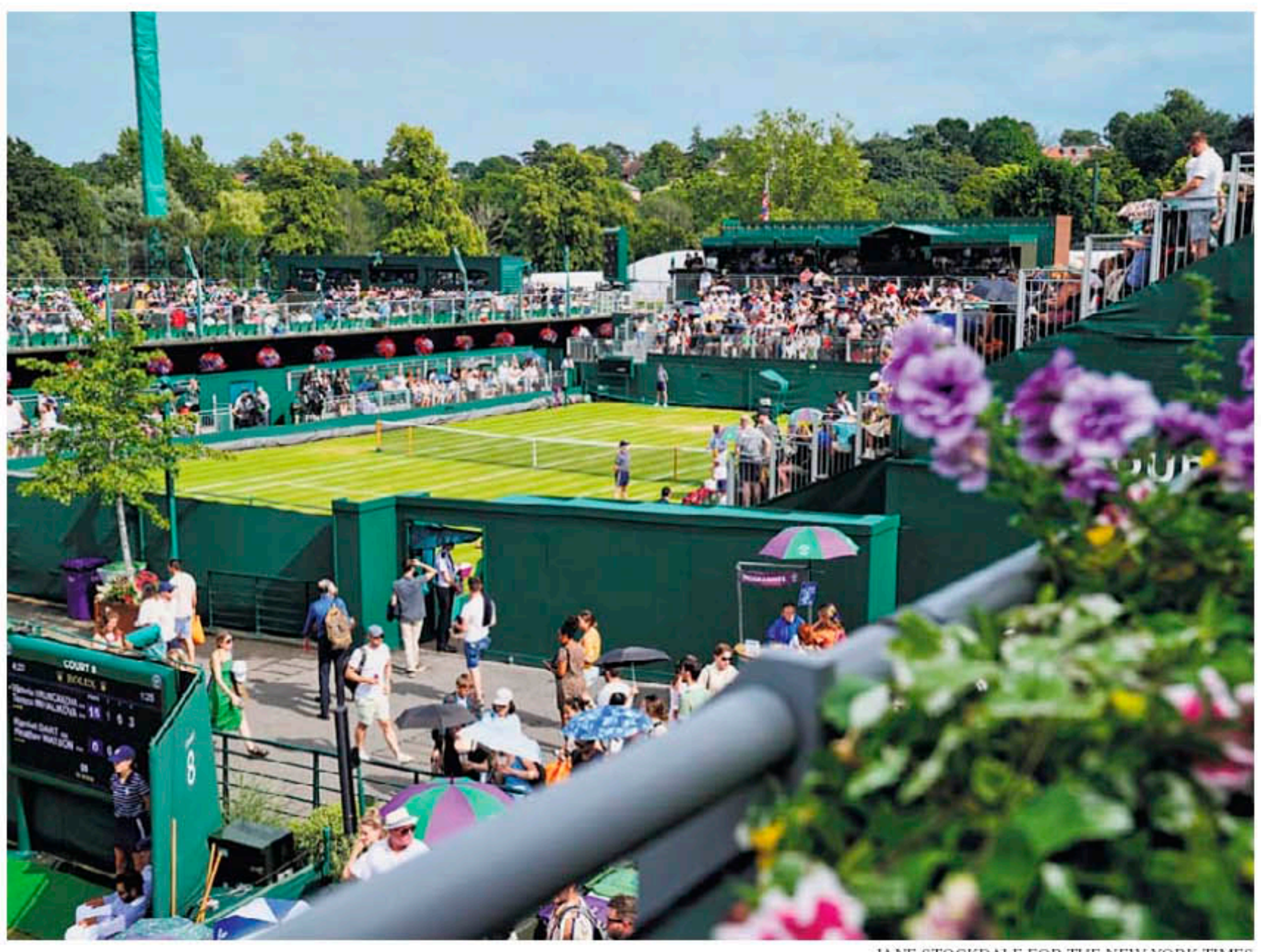
More than 200 teams, leagues and organizations globally have signed on to the United Nations Sports for Climate Action framework, which includes commitments to halve their greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Reducing emissions is one of the topics that will be discussed by leaders in business, science, and public policy at The New York Times Climate Forward event on Thursday.

Meeting these goals is complex because of the difficulty of finding clean sources of energy, adequate recyclers and eco-friendly suppliers. For Hattie Park, the sustainability manager at the All England Club, which hosts Wimbledon, reducing the amount of plastics is a big challenge.

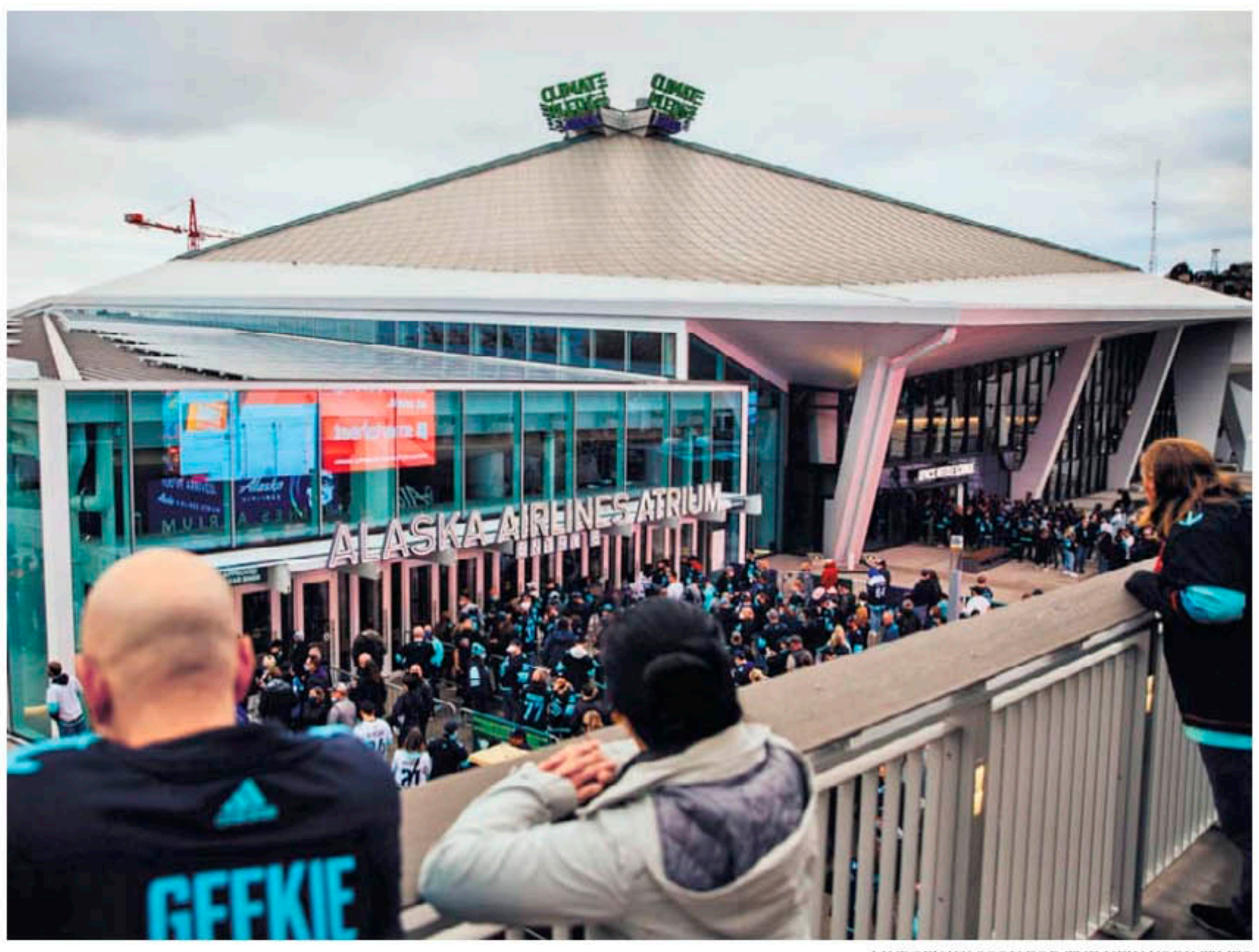
Single-use plastic bottles have been largely scrapped and more than 100 water-refilling stations were added for fans who brought their own bottles. Players at Centre Court must use refillable bottles, too.

Drinks are served in reusable cups, which can withstand at least a dozen or more washings, eliminating 500,000 disposable cups and lids each tournament. Customers pay a 1 pound ($1.25) deposit for a cup, and if they return it, they can get the money back or donate the funds to the Wimbledon charitable foundation, which has received more than £130,000 so far.

The racket strings discarded by the players are recycled and made into countertops for tables used at the tournament.



JANE STOCKDALE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



LINDSEY WASSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

At Wimbledon, above left, fans are encouraged to bring their own water bottles, and drinks are served in reusable cups. At Climate Pledge Arena in Seattle, left, there are solar panels on the roof of the Alaska Airlines Atrium, and 90 percent of solid waste is diverted from landfills.

"Doing the small things, it all adds up," Ms. Park said. "It's about finding a use for all these complicated waste streams."

Older building like those at Wimbledon present unique challenges. In Seattle, Climate Pledge Arena, which opened in 2021 after an extensive renovation, is constrained by its modest footprint. The arena's name comes from the commitment created by Amazon and Global Optimism for companies to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2040.

The arena diverts more than 90 percent of its waste from landfills in part by eliminating single-use plastics and buying compostable trays and other items. During events staff separate recyclables and compost in a small sorting room, and when events end items are separated by staff during cleanup before they reach the room.

"It's procurement on the front end and process on the back end," said Rob Johnson, the head of sustainability for the N.H.L.'s Seattle Kraken, the building's main tenant, along with the W.N.B.A.'s Seattle Storm. "Once you set a course and vision, you have to get a little creative."

Venue operators are now sharing best practices to reduce energy use and waste. Jason McLennan, who helped Climate Pledge Arena reach LEED status, helped set up Green Operations & Advanced Leadership, or GOAL, so arena and stadiums can share data and learn to reduce their energy and water bills.

The team at Mercedes-Benz Stadium created its own zero waste playbook, as well, to provide a road map for diverting waste from landfills by increasing composting and recycling.

"We want to show that we can operate this and make a business case for anybody," Mr. Bohenko said. "It's all attainable wherever you are. You just have to take what you have at your disposal and use that."

The United States Tennis Association, which runs the U.S. Open, followed that approach when a company in Delaware that accepted compostable forks, knives and other utensils used at the tournament closed. The materials, which are separated from other compostables like food scraps, are now sent to a waste-to-energy facility in Westbury, N.Y.

Since 2008, nearly 900 tons of food waste has been sent to compost farms and another 215 tons of unspoiled food has been donated to local communities.

Sponsors at the Open have also gotten involved. Wilson, which provides tennis balls, now ships them in cans with four balls instead of three, with no label and a special cap to reduce the amount of plastic.

"Partners and sponsors care what they are investing in," said Lauren Tracy, the senior director for strategic and business operations at the U.S.T.A. "It needs to be a priority for everyone on this round earth, whether you play tennis or not."

TRANSPORTATION

Weather Is Challenging Rail Lines

The risks are rising, but measures to reduce the danger will be costly.

By ELLEN ROSEN

The 351-mile LOSSAN rail corridor in Southern California, the second busiest in the United States, is under siege.

Running from San Diego to San Luis Obispo, the oceanside tracks sitting atop coastal bluffs face erosion from higher water levels in the Pacific and record rainfall. In addition, increased precipitation has destabilized terrain on the inland side, leading to landslides — like two in San Clemente recently — that have led to rail closures.

While the entire line is not impaired, there are significant hot spots where "the bluffs beneath the tracks are crumbling and the waves are crashing over the tracks because of sea-level rise," said Catherine Blakespear, a California state senator who has conducted hearings on the rail lines and whose district is among those traversed by the tracks.

"The vulnerabilities are substantial and only getting worse" she said, affecting "riders who take the train, freight that is transported on this section and even our military readiness," because the corridor is part of Stracnet, the acronym for the Strategic Rail Corridor Network. And if that weren't enough, a nuclear power plant is near the tracks.

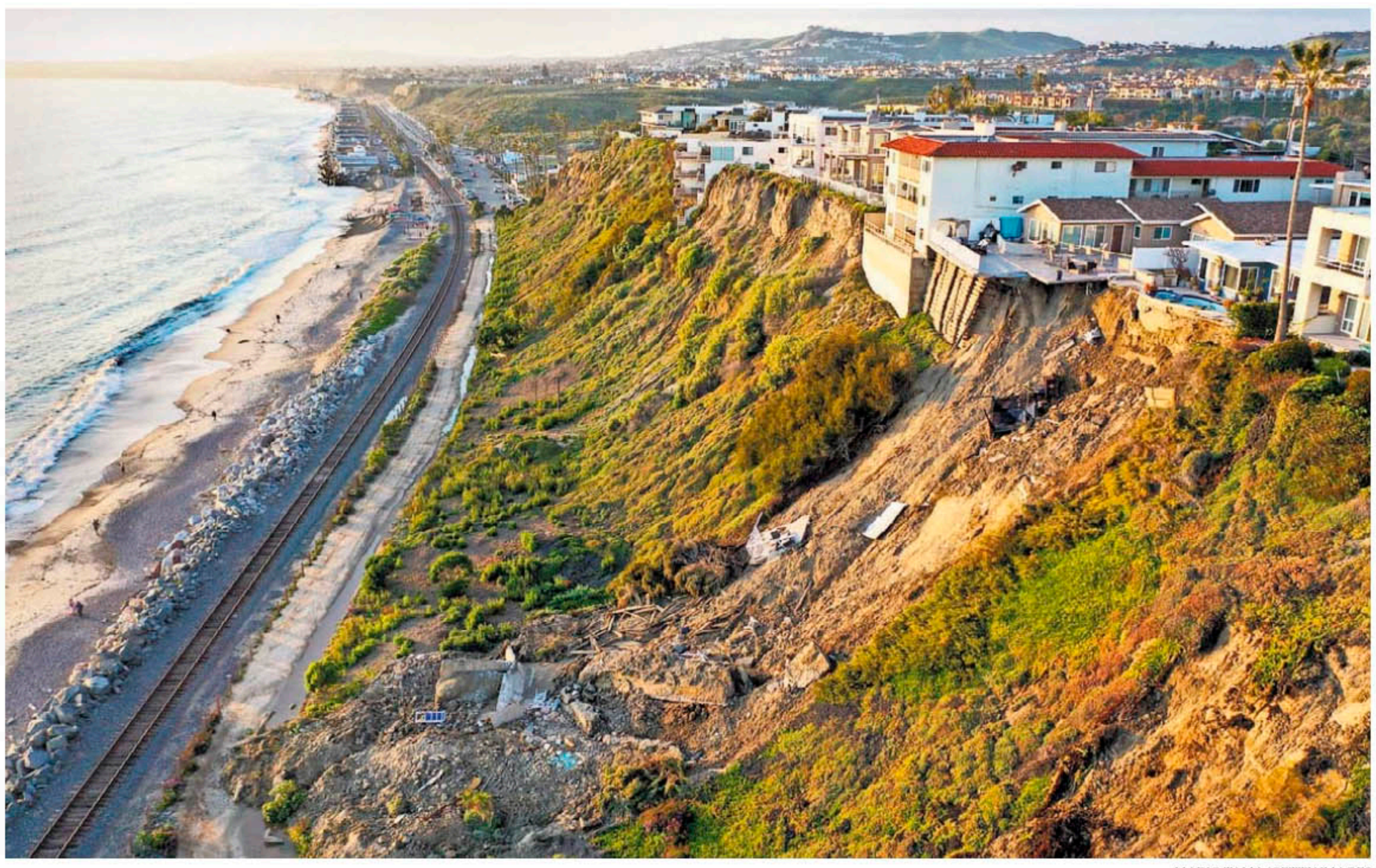
The situation in California is not unique. Climate change is challenging railroads and their infrastructure — whether for passengers or freight — worldwide.

In Europe, for example, heavy rains in Slovenia this summer resulted in the suspension of some train lines. And in Sweden, a train derailed recently when flooding washed out tracks.

High temperatures this summer also resulted in a suspension of the Amtrak-run line between Montreal and upstate New York, only months after service had resumed in the wake of the pandemic.

In countries that do not typically experience extreme heat or cold, or large amounts of rain or snow, railroads — whether private or state-owned — may be reluctant to "invest in lots of equipment or infrastructure for something that you wouldn't expect to happen very often; they'll just take the risk," said Lucie Anderton, the head of sustainability for the worldwide rail trade organization UIC. "But the problem is that these pain points are coming more often."

How governments and businesses respond to the impacts of climate change is one of the topics to be discussed by leaders in business, science and policy at The New York Times Climate Forward event on Thursday.



MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES

While abnormal temperatures and high winds cause their own problems, unusually large amounts of rain are considered the most dangerous.

"Extreme rainfall events can be fantastically destructive," said Scott Cummings, the assistant vice president for research and innovation of MxV Rail, the research subsidiary of the American Association of Railroads.

Flooding can wash away tracks entirely or push train cars off the rails. Excessive rain can destabilize terrain, resulting in dirt or rocks on the tracks. Localized landslides can cause derailments. (While technology like a so-called slide fence, which signals trains to stop if significant debris hits the tracks, helps, it cannot prevent the damage.)

And there's a multiplier effect, according to Kai Kornhuber, an adjunct assistant professor of climate at Columbia University. "We're seeing an increase of different types of extreme weather events, which can happen more often in close proximity, such as heavy precipitation followed by unusually high temperatures." The combination, he said, creates "complex climate risks." The second occurrence, he said, often hits people and infrastructure ecosystems even harder than the first.



MATS ANDERSSON/TT NEWS AGENCY, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Top, a landslide brought on by heavy rains this year dropped debris onto railroad tracks in San Clemente, Calif., and above, a train in Sweden derailed in August after landslides.

The problems are by no means new. A report written in 2003 delineated the many risks railroads face, including temperature swings.

Although railroad tracks are engineered to withstand the ambient temperatures of the region, Mr. Cummings said, extreme heat could result in buckling, or kinking, which could occur when the tracks in between two fixed points expanded in the heat.

"A lot of variables go into a computer model that is trying to understand how stable a track might be in resisting buckling," he added.

But it's not just infrastructure — engineers, conductors and maintenance workers are also exposed to the impacts of climate change.

While slowing trains can help deal with weather extremes, slowdowns translate into longer workdays for employees, said Ron Kaminkow, a locomotive engineer and the organizer for the cross-craft group of Railroad Workers United. I

In the meantime, rail operators are finding ways to bolster track resiliency, which can help prevent derailments and keep passenger and freight traffic moving.

For example, tracks typically abut rivers because the gradient of the terrain is better suited for the rails. That placement, however, puts the tracks at risk when heavy rains cause a river to overflow its banks.

To protect against that danger, rail operators may add large rocks or other solid material to fill in land that has eroded or raise the tracks, said Zak Andersen, the chief of staff and vice president for communications of BNSF Railway. Additionally, material, known as riprap, can help contain river water. In California, BNSF lifted the tracks to accommodate the unexpected refilling of Tulare Lake.

Modern tools — like satellite imaging — can help pinpoint problematic areas, Mr. Cummings said. His organization has a testing facility in Pueblo, Colo., which, by the end of the year, will include nearly 15 miles of track to explore many issues affecting railroads, including the impact of climate change (An irrigation system, for example, will measure track performance during heavy rainfall).

High winds are another significant risk because they can bring down overhead wires or lead to trees falling on the tracks or onto a passing train. Even trampolines, seemingly innocuous, become dangerous with high winds because they can become airborne, and "many find their way onto the tracks," Ms. Anderton said.

Adding vegetation to the areas surrounding the tracks can help stabilize the land. "Plantings and a nature-based drainage system can help take water, rather than an engineered drainage system," Ms. Anderton said. "Nature often has a better solution than using lots of concrete."

PROFILES

The Many Ways to Combat Climate Change

Efforts from Climate Forward participants include new grain technologies and mobilizing a service program.

By JIM COLGAN

The New York Times Climate Forward event on Thursday will feature distinguished speakers and panelists addressing the challenge of lowering carbon emissions. But in between the onstage presentations, participants also will have the opportunity to engage in small groups with some of the people who are on the front lines of efforts to thwart climate change. They range from an herbalist who teaches people the medicinal benefits of city plants to a waste expert whose videos about trash have gone viral on TikTok. Here are profiles of a few.



THE LAND INSTITUTE

Rachel Stroer



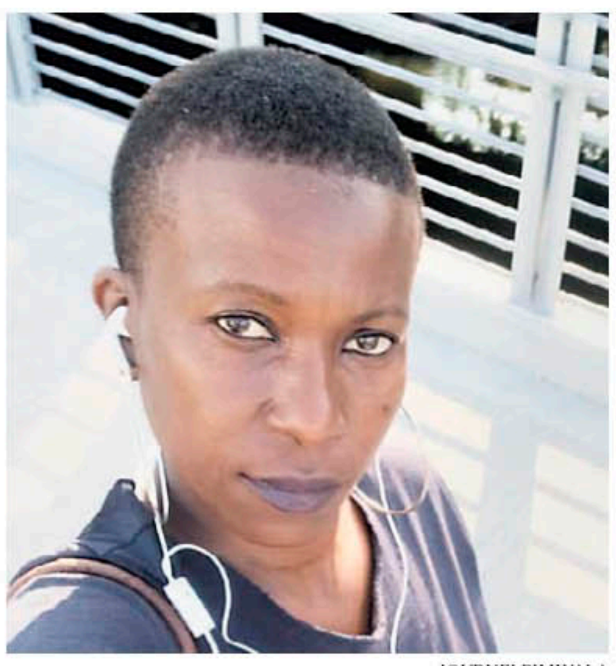
CALIFORNIA VOLUNTEERS, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Josh Fryday



TIM SEXTON

Anna Sacks



JOURNEI BIMWALA

Journei Bimwala

A Grain at a Time

Rachel Stroer: *president of the Land Institute in Salina, Kan.*

You might think that an M.B.A. would be an asset for the leader of a nonprofit that's trying to overhaul the agriculture system. But Rachel Stroer said she was hired in spite of hers.

Founded by the plant geneticist Wes Jackson in 1976, the Land Institute in Salina, Kan., has billed itself as rogue and unconventional. After joining in an operations role in 2016, Ms. Stroer ascended the ranks, becoming president in 2021.

The organization oversees some of the most promising technologies for grain, a plant that takes up a majority of the world's cropland and accounts for most of the calories that humans consume.

"The thing that's most inspiring about grain agriculture in particular is that it is so vast and so deep in the history of modern life," Ms. Stroer said.

Land Institute scientists created Kernza, the first perennial grain commercially grown in the United States, and their perennial rice has been adopted by 44,000 farmers across China. (Perennial means it grows for more than a couple of seasons without replanting.) Because the roots of such grains stay in the soil, they sequester carbon and rely on living microbes instead of chemical fertilizers.

Ms. Stroer, 42, grew up on the Kansas prairie but moved to New York for undergraduate studies at New York University. While there, she said, she held food and hospitality jobs that helped her understand the role of food as a bridge to the heartland, especially when discussing climate change.

The need to grow grain sustainably affects everyone, she said, as it is the key ingredient in so many of the things we love, whether you live in the rural Midwest or in a coastal city.

"We don't know what 2050 is going to look like with climate change on the trajectory that it's on, but I hope that of all the things that are still around, sourdough and beer are there," she said.

Making Sacrifices

Josh Fryday: *chief service officer for California*

People concerned about climate change often ask, "What can we do?" California is the first state to try to answer that question with a cabinet-level position.

Josh Fryday is the state's chief service officer, and he is responsible for the state's volunteer programs. That includes encouraging involvement in climate change, even paying benefits of as much as $30,000 to organizers and helping cities mobilize households to adapt to a warming planet.

Mr. Fryday, 42, a U.S. Navy officer in the Judge Advocate General's Corps from 2009 to 2013, credits his military background for his interest in the benefits of service. He said he was motivated to sign up after seeing how Americans were disconnected from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"We didn't sell war bonds," Mr. Fryday said. "We actually lowered taxes. No one was asked to sacrifice anything."

That is a stark difference from the norms of World War I and II, he said, where citizens were asked to grow liberty or victory gardens and to donate to the effort.

There is the question of how much difference small acts of service make in the face of continued large-scale emissions of carbon that have been linked to climate change.

"I think we're going to find out," he said, "but what I found is throwing our hands up in the air and saying, 'The issue is too big, there's nothing I can do about it,' certainly isn't the answer."

He also points to the ancillary benefits that come with service: skills, confidence and community building, to name a few.

Ultimately, Mr. Fryday said, the goal is to build a culture where service is the norm.

As for what the victory gardens of the climate age might be, "Composting," he said.

A Life in Waste

Anna Sacks: *@thetrashwalker on TikTok, legislative chairwoman for the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board, co-founder of New York's #SaveOurCompost coalition*

Anna Sacks isn't sure how to tell people at a dinner party what she does for a living.

"Sometimes, I go broad and say I work in sustainability," she said. "Sometimes, I go a little bit more specific and say I work in waste." .

To the millions of people who have viewed her videos on TikTok, Ms. Sacks is known as the Trash Walker. She documents her encounters rifling through the garbage outside retail stores, like Coach and CVS, throughout New York City. She is also known to the City Council thanks to her role recommending waste policy as the legislative chair of the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board.

In 2016, Ms. Sacks was working at an investment bank and failing to find meaning in a career that consumed most of her free time. She quit and signed up for a fellowship at a regenerative farm in Connecticut called Adamah, which is geared toward young Jewish adults. She said she was suddenly tracking the seasons and appreciating the benefits of composting.

When she returned to the city, she began looking at waste differently. Saddled with a "confusing résumé" of finance and farming, she took to social media. Eventually her videos went viral and some corporations started changing their practices — for instance, Coach said it would no longer destroy unsold products and Starbucks announced it would reduce waste.

Ms. Sacks, 32, said that while her legislative work took up much of her time, she hadn't figured out how to make that go viral.

"I love going through the trash. But I'm filling up a cart at the end of the trash walk, which is a drop in the bucket of New York City waste versus if you work on something larger like mandatory universal organics."

Still, Ms. Sacks said, it's a bit like voting. All the small efforts add up when you have millions of people taking part.

Free Stuff

Journei Bimwala: *urban forager, clinical herbalist, educator*

"I go foraging the way people go to the supermarket," said Journei Bimwala about her practice of identifying and preparing natural remedies using plants that grow wild in New York City.

Foraging is illegal throughout the five boroughs except for an area of parkland called the Bronx River Foodway, where Ms. Bimwala teaches about the nutritional and medicinal benefits of plants.

She began foraging 12 years ago when she asked a ranger in a public Bronx park, Orchard Beach, about a plant that caught her attention. It was an outdoor nature class for children and Ms. Bimwala was there with her 9-year-old son. The ranger dismissed the plant as useless, an invasive species, but Ms. Bimwala discovered it was mugwort, known for healing properties.

She did the same thing with other species until parents at the nature class started asking her to share her findings. Now she teaches urban foraging in New York and New Jersey and online around the world.

"What I do in my work is to connect people to the land by getting them to get to know the wild and medicinal plants that are growing around us so that those plants can be used," she said.

Ms. Bimwala, 40, was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where, she said, herbal remedies were a part of life. She makes it her mission to laud the benefits of what is freely available, like the leaves of a linden tree, which she recommends for relaxation. Instead of buying linden tea in the grocery store, Ms. Bimwala advised, just pick a few leaves off a tree and make your own.

REAL ESTATE

Finding a Better Way to Build

The construction industry is feeling pressure from all sides to build more sustainably.

By DEBRA KAMIN

Charlotte the child is active: running, playing, giggling while she rides her bike. But her namesake, Charlotte the condo building, is passive. Its airtight rooms use a fraction of the energy required by the buildings around it, staying cool in the summer and warm in the winter, while light-soaked and quiet.

Buildings account for nearly 40 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions, and on a rapidly warming planet, the pressure on the construction industry to build more sustainably is mounting fast.

Governments are placing restrictions on buildings' energy use and greenhouse gas emissions while tech companies are tapping automation and robotics to build smarter and more sustainably. And architects are increasingly considering resiliency and efficiency in their designs. Reducing emissions is one of the topics that will be discussed by leaders in business, science and public policy during The New York Times Climate Forward event on Thursday.

Charlotte of the Upper West Side, an eight-story condo on Columbus Avenue in Manhattan, is an example of how emission reduction was incorporated from the start.

It is one of a growing number of residential projects in New York City to receive Passive House certification: a climate-focused stamp of approval saved for insulated buildings that slash their energy usage by up to 75 percent compared to those around them. The developer, John Roe, named it after his 4-year-old daughter, and he said he approached Passive House certification as the ultimate amenity.

"To achieve true wellness, you can't do it without sustainability," he said.

But Charlotte, one of about 65 Passive Houses in New York City, also will have a significant advantage next year when Local Law 97, a cornerstone of former Mayor Bill de Blasio's Climate Mobilization Act, goes into effect.

The law, part of a series of steps devised to shrink the city's carbon emissions by 80 percent by 2050, will require any building of more than 25,000 square feet in New York City to meet new energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emission standards or risk fines each year. The penalties are stiff: $268 for every metric ton of carbon dioxide above the allotted limit, which studies estimate could amount to $200 million per year in penalties for some buildings. And it's a two-tier process, with initial caps being rolled out in 2024 and stricter ones looming in 2030, when fines could jump to $900 million per year for buildings that aren't in line.

Bridget Gainer, a vice president at the risk management firm Aon who currently also serves as commissioner of Cook County in Illinois, said laws like this were crucial to encouraging more sustainable building. "Everyone is responding to some sort of incentive, be it negative or positive," she said.

Besides government mandates, Ms. Gainer added, another force pushing the real estate industry toward sustainability today is insurance companies, which are increasingly pulling out of areas at risk of extreme weather and prompting home buyers to ask harder questions when considering properties.

"People are thinking, 'Am I going to be able to get insurance?', which is what allows them to ultimately get a mortgage," she said. "They are demanding far more resilient rebuilds, or else no one will want to insure their house."

Developers are increasingly looking for an overlap between building with resilience to extreme weather and building with more sustainable methods and materials, she said. And while new regulations are effective, Jeff Hendler, chief executive of the smart building software company Logical Buildings, said incentives were having an impact, too.

"It takes both the carrot and the stick to accelerate the change," he said.

Mr. Roe estimates he spent more than $90 million on Charlotte of the Upper West Side, which opened this spring. All units have four bedrooms with individualized ventilation, heating and cooling systems, and start at $9.95 million.

Todd Poisson of the firm BKSK Architects knew he would have to get inventive with his plans for the project, which he converted from a three-story commercial structure into a seven-unit, low-energy luxury condo building.

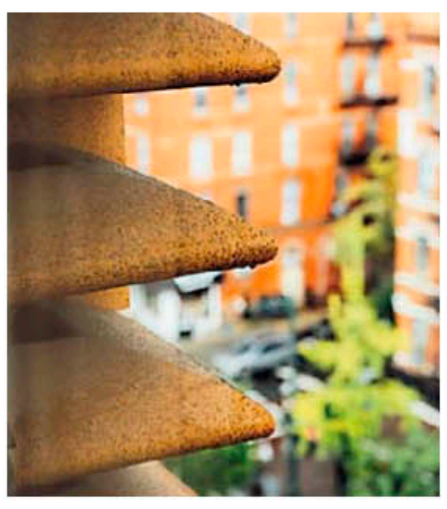
Now, four panes of triple-glazed glass act as a thermal cushion on the building's windows, while its facade, lined with terra-cotta baguettes — long, slender ceramic pipes stacked in neat vertical lines — that block the high summer sun while coaxing in extra light from the lower winter sun, regulate interior temperatures in even the most extreme weather.

"The thermal comfort inside is even, and the building doesn't need heating or cooling at the window wall as much as a typical building would," Mr. Poisson said. "Energy use is significantly less."

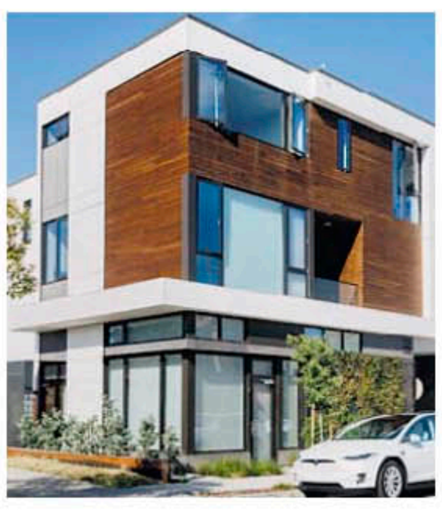
Mr. Hendler said he believed that creative ideas to combat climate change in the built environment were being rolled out largely because "younger people who grew up with climate change, who were little when Hurricane Katrina hit, are now the decision makers."

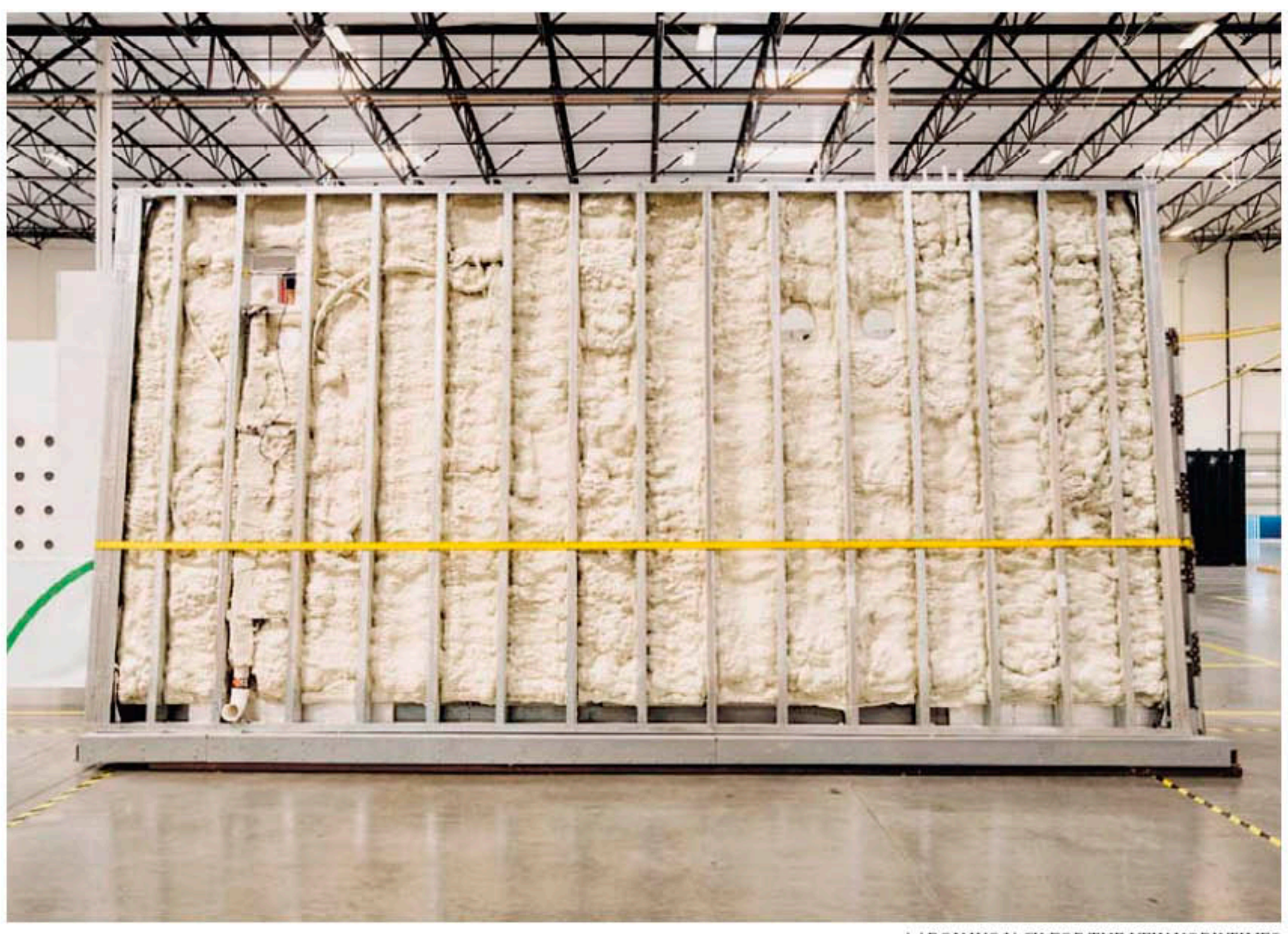


GEORGE ETHEREDGE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



Left, Charlotte of the Upper West Side is an eight-story condo on Columbus Avenue in Manhattan. Above, the building's facade is lined with terra-cotta baguettes — long, slender ceramic pipes stacked in neat vertical lines — that help regulate interior temperatures.





Veev, a building technology company, creates prefabricated closed walls, right, with electrical, piping and heating and cooling elements already inside. Laurel Townhomes in San Carlos, Calif., above, were built with Veev walls.

AARON WOJACK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Another force pushing the real estate industry toward sustainability today: insurance companies.

His company, Logical Buildings, is one of a handful that have created software to help buildings understand, then cut, their power usage.

Using a custom app and new smart meters from the local utility company, Con Edison, Logical Buildings works with owners of both private homes and multifamily buildings to lower energy usage. It's a service that comes in handy for those looking to enroll in programs like Demand Response, in which energy suppliers pay customers a bonus when they use less power.

"Paying people to use less is an incredible accelerant to fighting climate change," Mr. Hendler said.

Offering a pathway to faster, more streamlined construction is another.

At least that's what Amit Haller, chief executive of the building technology company Veev, believes.

In 2017 Mr. Haller, realizing that the process of erecting a single house was fragmented between carpenters, electricians, plumbers and builders, began exploring construction technology in a bid to offer a more efficient way to build a home.

At his company's factory outside San Francisco, he creates prefabricated closed walls with electrical, piping and heating and cooling elements already inside and delivers them to single-family home builders in Texas and California. Like life-size Lego pieces, they arrive ready to be assembled, cutting carbon emissions during the building process by as much as 50 percent.

"People don't think about the home as a product, but it's the most expensive product we'll ever buy in our lives," Mr. Haller said. "And there are so many inefficiencies with how they're built. We thought things should be done better."

They are part of a crowded new market. Eco Material Technologies and HIVE 3D are producing near-zero-carbon 3D-printed homes in Texas, using a proprietary cement mixture that they say can be produced with 92 percent lower emissions than traditional concrete.

Plantd is creating building materials using perennial grass; Hempstone is turning to the power of hemp, which has been popular in European buildings since the 1990s, to produce sustainable insulation for structures in New England with a combination of hemp and lime. And straw bale construction — which contrary to the tale of the Three Little Pigs, offers superior protection from fire damage than traditional materials and thermal insulation that can be three times more effective than other building methods — is gaining a foothold in California, where wildfire risk looms larger every season.

On a national level, the real estate industry has yet to truly respond to climate change, said L. Carl Fiocchi, a senior lecturer in the Building and Construction Technology Program at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. But he's holding out hope for change at the local level.

At least 147 bills to cut carbon emissions from buildings have been introduced in 24 states just this year, according to the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators.

Cobble together the flurry of local regulations that are now forthcoming in cities across America, he added, and there is real potential for the industry's carbon footprint to shrink at last.

"The hope is that the silver lining in this enormously black cloud is that it drives states to start adopting these codes," he said.

CITIZEN SCIENCE

Bird-Watching With a Purpose

This summer, readers shared sightings with scientists, aiding in conservation.

By EMILY ANTHES

One Saturday morning in June, Amy Simmons spotted some sparrows flitting around a coastal marsh in Maine. She and her two companions, all dedicated bird-watchers, quickly identified one of the foraging birds as a Nelson's sparrow, a small, round bird with a yellow stripe over its eye. Then, overhead, they spotted something slightly different. The stripe over this sparrow's eye had a more saturated, orange tint, and its breast was speckled with black and white.

It was a saltmarsh sparrow, a species threatened by sea level rise. Without significant conservation action, climate change could render the species extinct by the middle of this century, some scientists predict.

"It's a beautiful bird," said Ms. Simmons, who works in fund-raising at the National Audubon Society. "It's exciting to see it. But then it kind of breaks your heart at the same time. Because it is so threatened right now."

Ms. Simmons snapped some photos and logged the observation in eBird, a website and app that allows scientists at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to collect observations from bird-watchers worldwide. The data has already helped scientists keep tabs on bird populations, many of which are in steep decline, and track how their behaviors and lives are shifting with a changing climate.

But the data has gaps; eBird generally receives fewer submissions in the summer than it does during the spring and fall migratory seasons, and much of the data comes from popular bird-watching locations, like parks and nature preserves. So this summer, The New York Times collaborated with the lab on a citizen science project, inviting readers to make birding part of their daily routines and to share their observations with researchers. Participants were encouraged to continue birding throughout the slow season and to venture beyond their favorite bird-watching haunts.

A video summarizing the project will be shown during The New York Times Climate Forward event on Thursday, where leaders in business, science and public policy will be discussing climate change and efforts to deal with it.

"People took that call to action to heart," said Jenna Curtis, who is a project leader for eBird at the Cornell lab.

Roughly 25,000 people, including Ms. Simmons, signed up to participate; 46 percent said that they were new to birding. Though it's unclear how many of them actually followed through, more than 2,000 people submitted eBird checklists using the designated #NYT hashtag; together, these eBird users submitted more than 95,000 checklists between mid-May and the end of August. Readers also submitted their drawings of birds and reported joining others for bird-watching outings.

Data provided by Cornell — and interviews with participants — also suggests that the project prompted existing eBird users to remain more engaged through the slow summer season and to submit data from a greater assortment of locations.

Karla Simpson, a relatively new birder in Indiana, said the project expanded her understanding of where she might find interesting birds. When she attended her niece's wedding in Michigan, she logged 20 species — including wood ducks, northern flickers and red-bellied woodpeckers — at a pond behind her hotel, a Fairfield Inn & Suites in a busy business district. "As long as there was habitat, there were birds," she said.

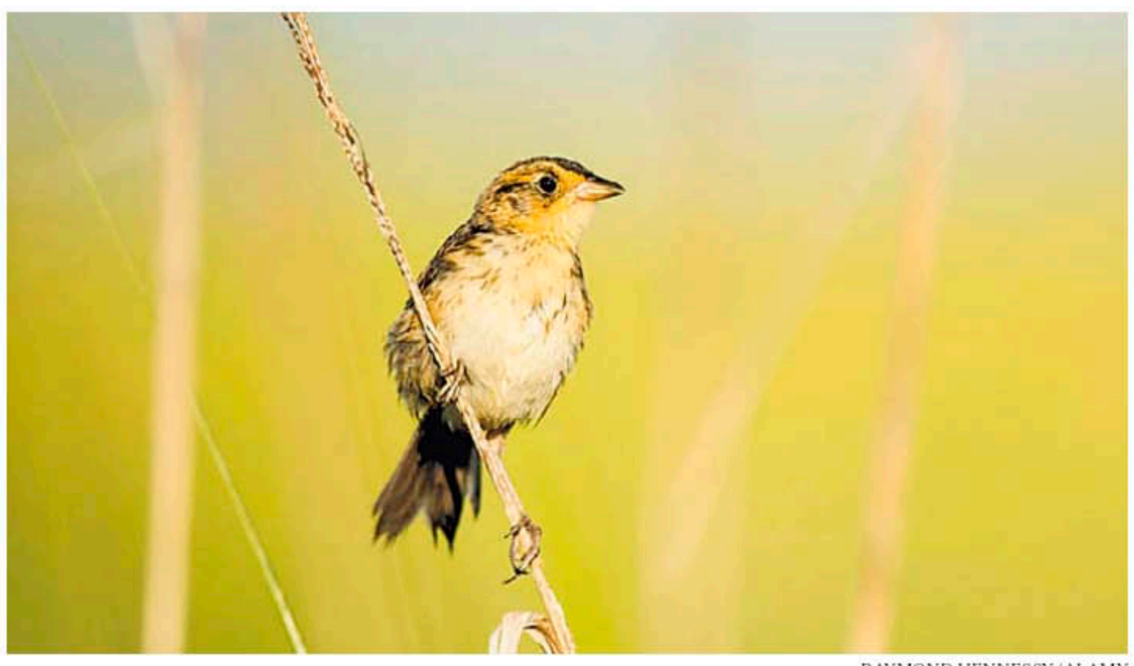
Ms. Simmons was not alone in logging a sighting of the saltmarsh sparrow; more than 100 people who used the #NYT hashtag reported seeing one, providing more data that experts might be able to use to better target conservation efforts, Dr. Curtis said. "It's super valuable information," she said. "They're seeing a bird that's on the brink, that their children or grandchildren might not see if we don't do something."

Many participants also reported seeing birds outside their typical ranges — a red-bellied woodpecker outside Montreal, a Carolina wren in Vermont — a sign that species are being pushed north by a warming climate. In Prospect Park in Brooklyn, Emily Clark spotted an anhinga, a long-necked water bird often found in Florida. "It's cool to see an anhinga in New York," Ms. Clark said. "But it's not necessarily a good thing, especially if they're being forced up here."

Climate change, and the extreme weather that comes with it, can also make life hard for birders; participants in this summer's project had to deal with extreme heat and unusual plumes of wildfire smoke.

Even with the not-always-favorable weather conditions, Ms. Clark said that the project motivated her to get back into birding after having a baby this spring, and that she hopes to share her love of birds with her new son. Bird-watching, she said, has brought her closer to her own father, a lifelong birder who gave her the middle name Wren. Ms. Clark passed the name on to her newborn, and when her father came into town to meet the baby, they bonded over the strange tropical bird that had landed in Brooklyn.

"On his first visit down to meet his new grandson," Ms. Clark said, "he hung out with the baby for a few hours and then he said, 'Is it all right if we make a quick trip to Prospect Park to see the anhinga?'"



RAYMOND HENNESSY/ALAMY

A saltmarsh sparrow, one of many bird species threatened by sea level rise. Some scientists predict that the bird could become extinct by the middle of this century.